

Hafa Adai!

Charges dismissed in case of woman accused of selling mom-in-law's stuff. **PAGE 2**
Torres says he is confident in CNMI Senate's fairness. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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Two deaths book-end new year

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

» **18 hospitalized;**
2,331 recoveries

The CNMI book-ended the transition from 2021 to 2022 on a grim note, recording its 14th death from COVID-19 on New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 2022, and its 13th death late Thursday night, Dec. 30.

Also, the CNMI's case tally for positive cases has now surged to a total of 3,287, most of them recorded since Oct. 28, when the first community transmission cases were identified.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. confirmed the CNMI's 14th death in a news

See **TWO** on **Page 4**

Omicron's New Year's cocktail: Sorrow, fear, hope for 2022

PARIS (AP)—Sorrow for the dead and dying, fear of more infections to come and hopes for an end to the coronavirus

pandemic were—again—the bittersweet cocktail with which the world said good riddance to 2021 and ushered in 2022.

New Year's Eve, which See **OMICRON** on **Page 4**

IN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS PSS returns to in-person classes

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

Bolstered by the CNMI's 94% vaccination rate and relying on the assurance of health professionals, the CNMI Public

» **Cohorts for middle schools until Jan. 10**

School System will be going back to school today, with elementary schools and high schools returning to full in-person learning, while middle schools will be on a cohort schedule until Jan. 10.

See **PSS** on **Page 4**

Princess Jane Gaza Sanchez is CNMI's 2022 New Year's baby

Nicole Gaza holds her daughter, Princess Jane Gaza Sanchez, who was born at the Commonwealth Health Center on Jan. 1, 2022, at 3:38am. Princess Sanchez weighed 11 lbs., 3 oz. and is the CNMI's 2022 New Year's baby. The baby's doctor is Dr. Sadie Laponsie and Gaza's is Dr. Michael Deary.

JOSHUA SANTOS

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

Proud parents Don Pangelinan Sanchez, 38, and Nicole Gaza, 30, rang in the New Year with the arrival of Princess Jane Gaza Sanchez, who came into the world last Jan. 1 at 3:38am at the Commonwealth

See **PRINCESS** on **Page 4**



COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:08pm, Jan. 2, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **94.6%**
Fully Vaccinated:

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	36,713
Fully Vaccinated:	34,799
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,279
Fully Vaccinated:	4,859
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,117

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,566	52 ¹	19,618
Recovered	18,959	13	18,972
Active	324	52	376
Deaths	270	0	270

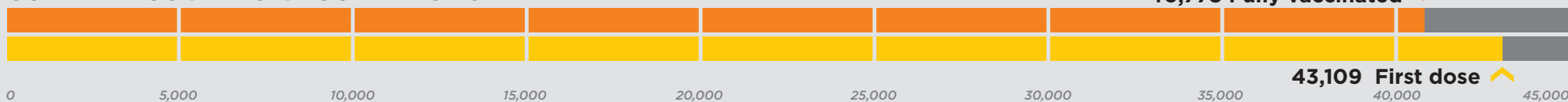
SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,085	202 ²	3,287
Traced via Travel Screening	314	5	319
Traced via Community Screening	2,771	197	2,968
Deaths	13	1	14

11/1=11;12/31=41

21/1=32; 12/31=47; 12/30=123

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



43,109 First dose

Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE



NATION

Nearly 1,000 homes and other structures are destroyed in a wildfire in Colorado.

PAGE 12



ASIA

Many of Afghanistan's destitute are making desperate decisions such as selling their children.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

Betty White, whose saucy charm made her a television mainstay, has died. She was 99.

PAGE 15



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Charges dismissed in case of woman accused of selling mom-in-law's stuff

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

At the request of the government, the Superior Court has dismissed the charges against a woman who was arrested for allegedly selling her mother-in-law's furniture without permission.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho dismissed, without prejudice, last week the theft charges against Liva Marie Seman Fital. A case that is dismissed without prejudice can be refiled again.

Camacho also ordered that any bail posted for the release of Fital be exonerated and all

court proceedings, including her arraignment on Jan. 10, be vacated.

According to the initial motion to dismiss the case filed by assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas, the Commonwealth moved to dismiss the case in order to further investigate the matter.

"...The Commonwealth believes it is in the interest of justice to dismiss the case without prejudice," she said.

According to court documents, Fital was accused of stealing and forging several personal checks and selling several pieces of home furniture and appliances of her mother-in-law.

The victim said Fital stole 12 sets of food warmers, one front-load washer and dryer, and home tools, all of which have an approximate value of \$4,000.

The victim said she found out about the forged checks after a family member showed her a copy of a denied check from the bank, of which the victim had no knowledge, adding that she had not signed it. She said she was also visited by several store owners demanding payments because of bounced checks.

Police also talked to a person who said she bought several pieces of furniture from Fital in late August and in September. She said she wants her money back from Fital before she surrenders the furniture. She said Fital was selling the furniture for \$800 at the time but accepted \$300 as

payment. Police showed the victim the pieces of furniture

Public warned: Rough seas until tomorrow

A high surf advisory is in effect until 6am tomorrow, Tuesday, along north facing reefs of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. There is also a high rip current risk until 6am Tuesday along north and east facing reefs of the three islands. A small craft advisory is also in effect until 6am Tuesday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large breaking waves of 7 to 9 feet along north facing reefs to 8 feet are expected in the surf zone. For the high rip current risk, dangerous rip currents are expected.

The high surf will be present along north facing reefs of the Marianas, while the high rip risk will be along north and east facing reefs.

These conditions will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore

and she positively identified them as her belongings.

into deeper water.

These hazards may continue into Tuesday and Wednesday. Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

The public is being advised to stay out of the water along north and east facing shores. Elsewhere, swim near a life-guard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Also, northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots, with gusts up to 30 knots and seas of 7 to 9 feet will be present in Tinian, Rota, and Saipan coastal waters. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. The hazardous conditions may extend into Wednesday. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in these hazardous conditions. *(Saipan Tribune)*



COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE TESTING

A team from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. conducts community surveillance testing at the Pacific Islands Club. From Dec. 30 to Jan. 1, CHCC confirmed a total of 202 positive cases of COVID-19 in the CNMI.

KRIZEL TUAZON



How to gather safely during the holidays



GET VACCINATED!



Make sure everyone in your household who qualifies for a COVID-19 vaccination gets vaccinated, or gets a booster shot.

Register for a COVID-19 vaccine at **www.vaccinatecnmi.com**, or walk in for a booster shot.

Learn more at **www.staysafecnmi.com/livecovidsafe**.



@cnmichcc | www.chcc.gov.mp

Another breach of contract suit filed against IPI

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is again faced with another breach of contract lawsuit after allegedly failing to pay for the services provided by a local company.

Art Man Corp., is suing IPI in the U.S. District Court for the NMI for breach of contract alleging that IPI owes it \$106,890 for portable toilet services.

Art Man, through attorney Colin Thompson, is asking the district court to issue an order awarding the plaintiff damages and ordering IPI to pay the amount owed for services rendered.

Aside from breach of contract, Thompson said his client is also alleging unjust enrichment, and statement of account.

According to its lawsuit, Art Man is in the business of renting portable toilets, including maintaining, cleaning, pickup, and delivery of portable toilets.

Thompson said IPI agreed to compensate Art Man for its services at specific rates per portable toilet.

According to their agreement, the plaintiff provided services at various locations of IPI as needed by the casino investor.

The price that IPI agreed to pay Art Man varied based on duration of the rental, location and number of portable toilets, the lawsuit stated. IPI was even given a discounted price of \$280 per unit for the Garapan casino

construction site and \$240 per unit for the remaining sites. However, In January 2020, IPI allegedly stopped paying its obligations regularly.

“Art Man followed up to collect payments but received only promises from IPI that it would pay what it owed in the near future,” the lawsuit said.

Art Man said it received the last payment from IPI on Sept. 14, 2020.

The plaintiff then delivered a letter to IPI regarding its unsettled account with conditions and terms of payment given until December 2020 to

clear the unsettled account.

Art Man said it continued to perform services through April 2021.

Between April 24, 2021 and July 7, 2021, Art Man removed all its units from IPI’s sites.

“Art Man sent IPI monthly invoices that describe the period of rental, location, number of portable toilets, and the amount owed for that period. IPI did not respond to invoices or demands for payment to Art Man. All of the invoices were received by IPI within 30 days after the provision of the services,” the lawsuit said.

OMICRON

From Page 1

used to be celebrated globally with a free-spirited wildness, felt instead like a case of déjà vu, with the fast-spreading omicron variant again filling hospitals.

“We just need enjoyment,” said Karen Page, 53, who was among the fed-up revelers venturing out in London. “We have just been in so long.”

The mostly muted New Year’s Eve celebrations around the world ushered in the fourth calendar year framed by the global pandemic. More than 285 million people have been infected by the coronavirus worldwide since late 2019 and more than 5 million have died.

In Paris, officials canceled the fireworks amid surging infections and reintroduced mandatory mask-wearing outdoors, an obligation followed by the majority of people who milled about on the Champs-Élysées as the final hours of 2021 ticked away.

In Berlin, police urged people not to gather near the Brandenburg Gate, where a concert was staged without a live audience. In Madrid, authorities allowed only 7,000 people into the city’s Puerta del Sol downtown square, a venue traditionally hosting some 20,000 revelers.

In the United States, officials took a mixed approach to the year-end revelry: nixing the audience at a countdown concert in Los Angeles, scaling it back in New York yet going full speed ahead in Las Vegas, where thousands turned up for a fireworks show on the Strip that was threatened by gusty winds but went off as scheduled.

President Joe Biden noted the losses and uncertainty caused by the pandemic but said: “We’re persevering. We’re recovering.”

“Back to work. Back to school.

Back to joy,” Biden said in a video posted on Twitter. “That’s how we made it through this year. And how we’ll embrace the next. Together.”

In New York, officials allowed just 15,000 people—vaccinated and masked—inside the perimeter around Times Square, a sliver of the 1 million that typically squeeze in to watch the famed ball drop. Outgoing Mayor Bill de Blasio, defending the event, said people need to see that New York is open for business.

Yet by Thursday, rapper LL Cool J had dropped out of the New York telecast after a positive COVID-19 test and restaurant owners battered by staffing shortages and omicron cancellations throughout the holiday season struggled to stay open.

“I’m really scared for our industry,” said New York restaurateur David Rabin, who watched reservations and party bookings disappear this month. “No one made any money in December. The fact they may have a good night tonight, it has no impact.”

Airlines also struggled as the year came to a close, canceling thousands of flights after the virus struck flight crews and other personnel and amid bad weather.

The pandemic game-changer of 2021—vaccinations—continued apace. Pakistan said it had fully vaccinated 70 million of its 220 million people this year and Britain said it met its goal of offering a vaccine booster shot to all adults by Friday.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin mourned the dead, praised Russians for their strength in difficult times and soberly warned that the pandemic “isn’t retreating yet.” Russia’s virus task force has reported 308,860 COVID-19 deaths but its state statistics agency says the death toll has been more than double that.

“I would like to express words of sincere support to all those who

lost their dear ones,” Putin said in a televised address broadcast just before midnight in each of Russia’s 11 time zones.

Elsewhere, the venue that many chose for New Year’s celebrations was the same place they became overly familiarly with during lockdowns: their homes.

Pope Francis also canceled his New Year’s Eve tradition of visiting the life-sized manger set up in St. Peter’s Square, again to avoid a crowd. In an unusual move for Francis, the 85-year-old pontiff donned a surgical mask for a Vespers service of prayer and hymns Friday evening as he sat in an armchair. But he also delivered a homily standing and unmasked.

“A sense of being lost has grown in the world during the pandemic,” Francis told the faithful in St. Peter’s Basilica.

France, Britain, Portugal and Australia were among countries that set new records for COVID-19 infections as 2021 gave way to 2022.

In London, the normal fireworks display, which would have attracted tens of thousands of people to the city center and the banks of the Thames, was replaced by a light and drones show broadcast on television. Location details about the spectacle were kept secret in advance to avoid crowds gathering.

“The last two years have been so difficult for so many people, so many have suffered and there is a point when we need to start coming together finally,” said Mira Lluk, 22, a special needs teacher.

France’s unprecedented 232,200 new cases Friday marked its third day running above the 200,000 mark. The U.K. was close behind, with 189,846 new cases, also a record. In London, officials said as many as 1 in 15 people were infected with the virus in the week before Christmas.

Dec. 29—was partially vaccinated, and that the 14th’s vaccination status was pending.

Separately, in news releases from Dec. 30 to Jan. 1, CHCC confirmed a total of 202 positive cases of COVID-19. CHCC first announced that a total of 123 cases were confirmed from Dec. 27 to 29: one case was confirmed on Dec. 27; 50 on Dec. 28; and 72 on Dec. 29. By identification method, 28 were found through contact tracing and 95 through community testing.

CHCC then confirmed 47 cases on Dec. 30. Of the 47, 12 were found through contact tracing, 32 through community testing, and three through travel testing.

Most recently, CHCC confirmed

32 cases on Dec. 28 and Dec. 31: two cases were confirmed on Dec. 28 and 30 cases on Dec. 31. By method, 15 were found through contact tracing, 15 through community testing, and two through travel testing.

In all its recent releases, CHCC said that the cases have been isolated and are being actively monitored, and added that the vaccination statuses of the recent cases were pending verification.

As of Dec. 31, CHCC reports that there have been 2,331 recoveries and 655 active cases since Oct. 28. As of Jan. 1, CHCC reports 18 hospitalized as a result of COVID-19: 11 vaccinated, seven vaccinated, three on a ventilator, and two were discharged.

PRINCESS

From Page 1

Healthcare Corp. hospital.

Weighing in at 11 lbs, 3 ounces, Princess Jane is the couple’s first daughter and will have three big brothers to watch over her.

The infant’s doctor is Dr. Sadie Laponsie and Gaza’s is Dr. Michael Deary.

Gaza said yesterday that she first began feeling contractions on New Year’s Eve at 3am and soon after was brought to the CHCC hospital.

Gaza added that Princess Sanchez will be a sister to her three boys and that she intends to “stay strong” for them. It was learned that Don Sanchez is cur-

rently in detention.

“Me and the father thank God that we have a beautiful baby girl. She’s so healthy and so beautiful. ... I thank God again for having her. I wish her father was here...but I will stay strong for her and my three boys. We’re just keeping strong for each other,” said Gaza.

When asked if Don Sanchez was or will be allowed to visit her and Princess Sanchez, Gaza said he is not allowed to visit the two for COVID-19 safety reasons. On a positive note, though, Gaza said that Don Sanchez was recently tested for COVID-19 and is so far doing well. Gaza again thanked God for keeping her family safe and for “really hearing our prayers.”

PSS

From Page 1

According to the announcement published Jan. 1, elementary schools will be open for full in-person learning. On Mondays, these schools will be open from 7:30am to 11:30am. From Tuesday to Friday, these schools will be open from 7:30am to 2pm. An exception is made for Kagman Elementary School, which PSS said “will remain with [a] double session schedule for kinder[garten].”

Middle schools will be on a cohort schedule (small groups) until Jan. 10. On Mondays, middle schools will be open from 8am to 11:45am, and from Tuesday to Friday will be open from 8am to 2:45pm. An exception is made for Hopwood Middle School, which “will remain with [a] double session schedule.”

High schools will be open for full in-person learning. On Mondays, high schools will be open from 8:30am to 12:30pm. From Tuesday to Friday, these schools will be open from 8:30am to 3:15pm.

The official announcement can be found on the CNMI PSS Facebook page. PSS also asks students and parents to refer directly to their respective schools for detailed bell schedules.

The return to full in-person classes was made during a Board of Education meeting last Dec. 28, during which Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada said that PSS’ health professionals and PSS’ partners at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. agree that the CNMI’s high vaccination rate ensures a safe return to full in-person classes for PSS’ secondary and elementary school students.

“Our health professionals have confirmed that the overall CNMI full vaccination rate of 92% makes it safe for PSS to transition back to full in-

person learning for secondary and elementary schools depending on vaccination rate. This has been concurred by our [CHCC] partners. With that said, all PSS elementary, middle, and high schools are ready to welcome back students with a high standard of safety and care,” said Ada.

He said that elementary schools will continue with full in-person learning as scheduled prior to Oct. 29 and the Early Intervention program will continue providing virtual services to students and families. For Early Head Start/ Head Start on Rota and Tinian, full in-person operations will continue as usual. Early Head Start/ Head Start on Saipan will be offering home-based and center-based services for families until further notice.

As for gauging hesitancy by students and parents to attending classes in-person come Jan. 3, Ada said that PSS does not have these numbers yet, but the hope is for this data to be collected by the end of this week. Once PSS has these findings, Ada said PSS will work closely with hesitant students and parents to assure them that adequate safety measures are in place in PSS schools.

“We do have those cases of students and parents who don’t want to come to campus for safety reasons. However, we [don’t know those numbers yet], and [the] school teams will be putting those numbers together. Between Jan. 3 [and] Jan. 7, we will know how many students aren’t coming to school within that week. Once we get those numbers, we will work with those families and students to try to get them to come to the campus and...do our best to educate them about the school’s cleanliness, safety protocols, and four items,” said Ada, referring to encouraging vaccinations and the “3 W’s”: washing your hands, watching your distance, and wearing a face covering.

TWO

From Page 1

release on Jan. 1, 2022, but did not disclose any further details. The 13th fatality was also affirmed in a late Thursday new release and also did not release much detail aside from saying that the victim was one of five patients who recently passed away. It said the patients tested positive for COVID-19 in December and were identified at CHCC. No further details will be disclosed.

Separately, CHCC public information officer Guillermo Lifofoi told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the CNMI’s 13th COVID-19-related death—which was confirmed on

Of 9 senators, only DeLeon Guerrero not leasing car using gov't funds

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Of nine senators, only Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) does not lease a vehicle that's paid for by government funds.

In response to Saipan Tribune's request, the office of Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) provided Thursday a list showing that eight senators are leasing vehicles with government funds. The Senate's list does not indicate what type of vehicles, models, and year. Hofschneider's staff referred Saipan Tribune to the Office of the Public Auditor for more information.

It was Public Auditor Kina B. Peter who requested assistance from Hofschneider last Dec. 1 for information regarding whether senators have purchased or leased a government vehicle paid for by government funds. Peter sent the same request for a list

of leased vehicles last Dec. 1 to House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan).

Peter said OPA is doing a survey regarding all CNMI government vehicles.

When asked why she is not leasing a vehicle and is instead using her private car, DeLeon Guerrero said yesterday that her office does very minimal runs outside the office.

DeLeon Guerrero is author of a pending Senate Bill 22-53, which seeks to prohibit the purchase of leased vehicles paid by public funds by elected officials.

The bill, however, allows an exemption for a government agency to purchase the leased vehicles strictly for the agency's use.

DeLeon Guerrero stated in the bill that the purpose of this legislation is to stop the scheme of converting leased vehicles to personal vehicles at a discounted price as a re-

sult of payments made using public funds.

She said a government agency, however, may negotiate to purchase a leased vehicle strictly for the agency's use.

The senator said many vehicles are being leased by government agencies for its employees' use during work hours.

She said elected officials also lease vehicles for their transportation in performing their duties as elected officials and for their office use.



DeLeon Guerrero

She said the lease period of vehicles is usually annually and renewable each year thereafter. DeLeon Guerrero said after years of the use of the leased vehicle and payment of the monthly rental amounts, the vehicle lessee negotiates with the lessor for a discounted price and the lessee is given the option to purchase the vehicle as their personal vehicle.

The senator said it is not fair that the lessee who pays the rental payments with pub-

lic funds is the only one individual accorded the discount benefit to purchase the vehicle as personal vehicle. She said this scheme is not right.

In May 2018, then-Labor secretary DeLeon Guerrero was acquitted by Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho of three traffic charges—using a government vehicle that had tinting on its windows, that was not marked as a government vehicle, and did not bear government license plates.

Villagomez's list submitted to OPA last Dec. 7 shows that, except for Reps. Vicente

C. Camacho (D-Saipan), Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), and Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan), all House members have leased vehicles using government funds.

Villagomez's list, a copy of which was forwarded to Saipan Tribune, shows what type of vehicles, models and years are being leased by the 17 representatives.

Saipan Tribune

Make it your
DAILY habit.

Vendors sought for Precinct 5 swap meet

Precinct 5 is hosting a weekend swap meet on Jan. 22, 2022, at the Kagman Community Center basketball court and is soliciting vendors who may want to participate.

This is an outdoor event for the Precinct 5 community to clear out the old to make way for the new year. This event is created to host a "multi-family" swap-meet style event. This event will focus on recruiting Precinct 5 vendors, but will be open to all buyers in the CNMI community.

This is a one day event to allow for registered partici-

pants to sell and/or trade their secondhand housewares and gently-used clothing and accessories.

To register to be a vendor at the Precinct 5 swap meet, go to <https://bit.ly/P5Thrift>. Vendors from Precinct 5 will be prioritized. Interested vendors are encouraged to submit the form (<https://bit.ly/P5Thrift>) by Jan. 7, 2022, to confirm your participation in this event. Thank you for your time and support in making these kinds of activities available to the Precinct 5 community. (PR)

ART MAN

CORPORATION



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Kilili: FEMA provides Marianas \$10,894 in funeral cost aid so far

As of Dec. 6, 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program has provided a total of \$10,894 in aid to the Marianas with, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (MP-Ind) over the weekend.

The FEMA funeral cost assistance aid is available for Marianas families who lose a loved one to COVID-19.

Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter that applicants for assistance must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or qualified aliens. The delegate said the death must have occurred in the United States and been caused by the coronavirus. He said assistance is limited to a maximum of \$9,000 per funeral.

“To apply for the aid, call toll-free to (844) 684-6333 from 9am to 9pm ET, Monday through Friday,” Sablan said.

The Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. confirmed Saturday the CNMI’s 14th pandemic-related death.

Last week, Patrick C. Guerrero, who is the governor’s authorized representative, said the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program is a direct assistance, which means that the individual will have to apply on their own by calling 1-844-684-6333, Guerrero said there is no option to apply online for such funeral assistance at this time.

He said the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program is available to applicants of the CNMI who have incurred funeral expenses due to the virus on or after Jan. 20, 2020. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

USCIS extends flexibility for responding to requests

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending the flexibilities it announced on March 30, 2020, to assist applicants, petitioners, and requestors who are responding to certain:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Re-scind;
- Notices of Intent to Terminate regional centers; and

- Motions to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5, Receipt of Derogatory Information After Grant.

Response due date: This flexibility applies to the documents listed above if the issuance date listed on the request, notice or decision is between March 1, 2020, and March 26, 2022, inclusive. USCIS will consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking any action.

In addition, USCIS will consider a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, or Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA), if:

- The form was filed up to 90 calendar days from the issuance of a decision we made; and
- We made that decision between Nov. 1, 2021, and

March 26, 2022, inclusive.

Under previously announced flexibilities, USCIS considered a Form I-290B or a Form N-336 if the form was filed up to 60 calendar days from the issuance of a decision by USCIS, and if such decision was issued between March 1, 2020, and Oct. 31, 2021, inclusive. *(PR)*

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the “Open Government Act”, the Public School System State Board of Education, through their Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), is hereby serving notice to the general public that it will hold its ICC council meeting on Thursday, January 6, 2022, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, at the Early Intervention Program Building in Garapan via virtual meeting, please contact 664-4841 for meeting link.

AGENDA

- Call to Order**
 - Roll Call
 - Adoption of Agenda
 - Adoption of Minutes
- Director’s Updates:**
 - FFY20 – State Performance Plan – Annual Performance Report
 - Baseline and Targets
- ICC Calendar of Events**
- Open Discussion**

Robin L. Palacios
Director, Early Intervention Program

Paid for by IDEA, Part C Funds

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

PORT OF SAIPAN CPA OFFICE LEAK REPAIRS PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-22

The Commonwealth Ports Authority’s (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the CPA Office Leak Repairs at the Captain George F. Fleming Memorial Building at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-001-22.

These services are being funded by CPA and is in accordance with CPA’s Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA’s Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA’s Executive Assistant/Project Manager, at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri N. Llagas at cpa.receptionist@pticom.com.

Questions or inquiries regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater via email at wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, January 14, 2022**.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2022**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: December 28, 2021

NMTI
NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
P.O. Box 504880 Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No.: (670) 235-6684

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

January 6, 2022
2:00 p.m. @ NMTI Campus, Lower Base

AGENDA

- Call to Order
- Adoption of Agenda
- Public Comments
- Adoption of Minutes – October 28, 2021
- Unfinished Business
 - Electronic Signatures for Trustees – Policy Adopted on October 28, 2021
 - CEO Appraisal Forms from Trustees
 - Status Update on existing FHB account
 - Status Update on Tinian Rep. and Saipan Vacancy
 - Fundraising Planning
- Treasurer’s Report
- CEO’s Report
 - EDA Construction Project
 - Online Learning Platform Update
- New Business
 - Strategic Planning Session with Board Members, Faculty & Staff
- Adjournment

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, P.O. BOX 504880 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEE, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, THAT THE NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE PERSONNEL SYSTEM SHALL BE APPLIED AND ADMINISTERED ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AS DEFINED BY THE NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC LAW 6 - 10, REGARDLESS OF AGE, RACE, SEX, RELIGION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION OR BELIEF, MARITAL STATUS, DISABILITY OR PLACE OF ORIGIN. APPLICANTS FOR THIS POSITION MUST BE A U.S. CITIZEN OR IS ELIGIBLE AND AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THE U.S., INCLUDING THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.

➡ CONTINUOUS & UNTIL FILLED JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcement #	Position/Title	Pay Level /Step	Per Annum	Minimum Requirements	Closing Date	Location
21-015	GRANTS COORDINATOR	12/01-06	\$27,570.67 - \$35,187.94	High School diploma or equivalent plus four (4) years demonstrated experience in grant writing proposals OR Associate’s Degree plus two (2) years demonstrated experience in grant writing proposals.	Jan. 3 – 17, 2022	Lower Base, Saipan
21-016	IT SPECIALIST	14/01-03	\$30,396.67 - \$33,512.32	High School diploma or equivalent and/or two (2) years relevant experience OR Associate’s Degree plus two (2) years relevant experience.	Jan.3 – 17, 2022	Lower Base, Saipan
21-017	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	01/01-06	\$16,120.00 - \$20,573.67	High School diploma or equivalent plus one (1) year relevant experience.	Jan.3 – 17, 2022	Lower Base, Saipan

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE NMTI HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT LOWER BASE, SAIPAN. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE; (2) TRANSCRIPTS/CERTIFICATIONS; (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS); (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER; AND (5) RESUME. COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, P.O. BOX 504880 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 235-6684. FREE COPY.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2021-044	Administrative Specialist	\$25,000.00-\$30,000.00 per annum- Ungraded	Dec. 15, 2021	Jan. 05, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

BOG employees select 5 nonprofits for holiday donation

HAGATNA, Guam—As they have done in the last few years, Bank of Guam employees have selected five nonprofit organizations to receive a holiday donation from the bank, including the Ohala Foundation of Tinian.

The 2021 Bank of Guam holiday donation beneficiaries, each receiving \$5,000, are: Harvest House; H.E.A.R.T. Guam; Ayuda Wings for Life; Ohala Foundation; and Women United Together Marshall Islands.

Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, Bank

of Guam's president and chief executive officer, said: "We are pleased to give voice to our employees for this annual holiday donation. Begun as a way to practice corporate social responsibility while being environmentally mindful, the donations are in lieu of corporate gifts during the holiday season, and for the first time include nonprofits in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands." (PR)



The Ohala Foundation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Ayuda Wings for Life.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Harvest House.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



H.E.A.R.T. Guam.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Women United Together Marshall Islands.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Labor

Office of the Secretary

1356 Mednilla Avenue | Capitol Hill | P.O. Box 10007 | Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 664-3196 | Fax: (670) 664-3197 | Web: www.marianaslabor.net



NOTICE TO EMPLOYERS

In accordance with Employment Rules and Regulations of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (NMIAC), the CNMI Department of Labor (CNMI DOL) mandates compliance of the following for all eligible private sector employers. Failure or refusal to comply is cause for CNMI DOL to issue a Notice of Violation to the employer which may result in fines and other sanctions following a due process hearing in the Administrative Hearing Office.

1. Post Job Vacancy Announcement (JVA) on CNMI DOL website

An employer who intends to employ a foreign national worker, transitional worker, or nonimmigrant alien on a full-time basis (under any new employment arrangement, any renewal of any existing employment arrangement, or any transfer) must post a Job Vacancy Announcement (JVA) on the CNMI DOL website at www.marianaslabor.net. NMIAC § 80-20.1-225(a). No waiver is available for the job vacancy announcement requirement. NMIAC § 80-20.1-225(e).

2. Submit Total Workforce Listing

Each business employer *shall report quarterly, as of the last day of the calendar quarter, the number of employees, job classification, and the hourly wage* of employees for whom wages were paid during the quarter. NMIAC § 80-20.1-505(b) (emphasis added). The Department requires employers to present this information in a document called "Total Workforce Listing," via email: documents@marianaslabor.net (Excel format).

The Total Workforce Listing is due each quarter:

1st Quarter (January – March)	due on April 30
2nd Quarter (April – June)	due on July 31
3rd Quarter (July – September)	due on October 31
4th Quarter (October - December)	due on January 31

Attention: The Total Workforce Listing for the 4th Quarter 2021 is due on or before January 31, 2022. Online submissions may be emailed to documents@marianaslabor.net (in Excel format), delivered to the DOL Administrative Services Office, Building #1356, Capitol Hill, or faxed to (670) 664-3197. Online submissions are preferable.

3. Adhere to Workforce Participation Minimum Percentage requirement

Any employer, unless exempt, who employs workers on a full-time basis must certify that 30% or more of its full-time employees are U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents, and/or CNMI permanent residents. 3 CMC § 4525 and NMIAC § 80-20.1-210(c)(3). Failure to maintain a minimum percentage of 30% will result in a Notice of Violation filed against the employer.

4. Submit new or updated Workforce Plan

All employers who employ nonimmigrant alien workers, unless exempt, must submit a new or updated Workforce Plan every twelve months. NMIAC § 80-20.1-510(c). A workforce plan shall identify specific positions currently occupied by a foreign national worker and timetable for accomplishing the replacement of the foreign national worker with qualified U.S. citizens, CNMI permanent residents, and U.S. permanent residents until the workforce participation objective is met. NMIAC § 80-20.1-510(b). *The Workforce Plan form is available on the CNMI DOL website under Forms & Publications at www.marianaslabor.net.*

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS WITH MULTI-ISLAND JOB SITES

An employer with multiple island job sites in any of the Mariana Islands must submit a separate report for each island. For example, if an organization employs workers for job sites in Saipan and Tinian then the employer must file two separate quarterly compliance reports (one for Saipan and another for Tinian).

- Rota employers must email the Total Workforce Listing and Workforce Plan to documents@marianaslabor.net and dolrota@gmail.com OR delivered to the Rota DOL Field Office at Old Rota High School Campus, Liyo Village.
- Tinian employers must email the Total Workforce Listing and Workforce Plan to documents@marianaslabor.net and tinianlabordepartment@gmail.com OR delivered to the Tinian DOL Field Office at Edu's Plaza, 1st Floor, San Jose Village.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYERS WHOSE OPERATIONS WERE AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Indicate the employment status on the Total Workforce Listing of those employee that are currently on furlough, laid off or working reduce hours as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

COVID is surging again. But omicron leaves us with a tiny bit of hope

The terrible year of 2020 ended with a glimmer of hope. While the United States and California were in the grip of the worst surge yet of the pandemic, the first vaccines against COVID-19 were being distributed to health care workers and plans were underway for the largest immunization rollout in the nation's history.

At that point, it looked like 2021 would be the year that the U.S. got a handle on the pandemic.

Alas, it was not to be. Too many people rejected the free vaccinations and chose to flout simple infection-control methods like mask-wearing, leaving the door open for the more infectious delta variant. Then, in November, the world was shaken by the emergence of an even more infectious strain of the coronavirus, omicron, which has quickly overtaken delta to become the dominant strain in the U.S.

In the end, more Americans died of COVID-19 in 2021 than in 2020. As of Tuesday, nearly 820,000 Americans have died from the disease, which is considerably more than those thought to have died during the 1918 H1N1 influenza pandemic. And with a second winter surge well underway, the dying will continue into 2022.

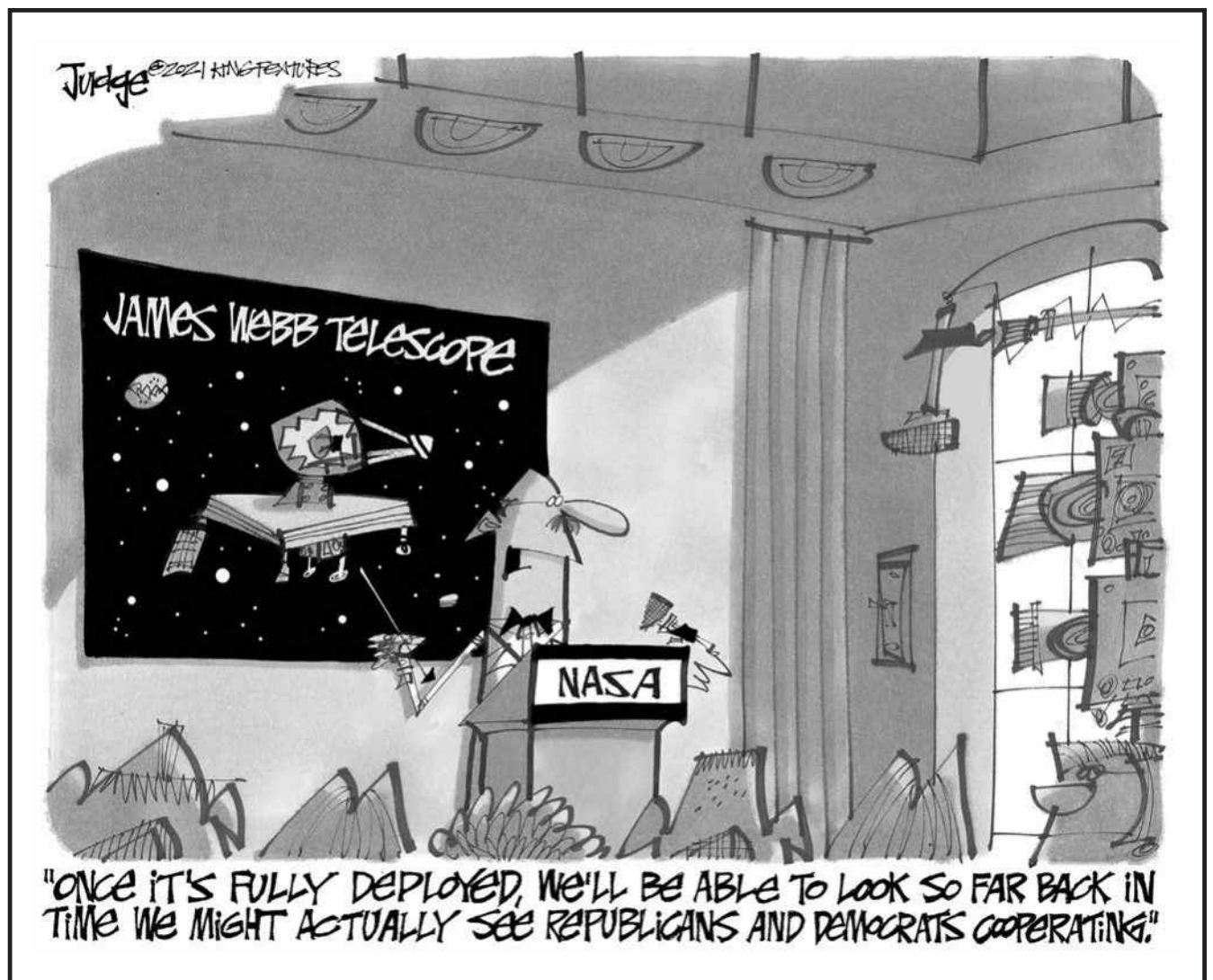
But there is some hope as data trickle in about omicron. Early studies out of Britain and South Africa and initial data from U.S. hospitals support what health care professionals have been reporting anecdotally for weeks—that omicron appears less likely than earlier strains to result in serious illness and hospitalization, especially for vaccinated people.

If the data hold, it would be a tremendous relief given that omicron replicates and spreads with terrifying speed, even among vaccinated people. And it could mean that the coronavirus is on the path to a mild, endemic state that would put an end to the pandemic.

Now, here's where we temper this sliver of hope with stark reality. Even if omicron is just half as lethal (as some data suggest) it is still quite deadly—just not as much as we feared. And even if it's relatively mild for many of those who are fully vaccinated, tens of millions of Americans remain unvaccinated, including children under 5 who are not yet cleared for COVID-19 shots and whose numbers are increasing in hospitals.

It's nice to have a tiny bit of good news as 2021 ends in another round of canceled plans and overtaxed hospitals. We should use this occasion to double down on public health protections, such as placing vaccination and testing restrictions on domestic air travel, and to increase vaccination and booster shots. The pandemic may not be over, but it's possible that with effort, 2022 may really be a better, less deadly year.

© 2021 Los Angeles Times



Enemies in our midst

Cautiously and cheerlessly, we are tiptoeing into yet another new year, telling each other, through our masks, that we hope it will at least be better than last year.

Yes, it's just what we were wearing and saying a year ago, when we bid good riddance to 2020. But we know now that things are better. At least we're not being led by that guy who was all about luring Americans into his mega-MAGA, mask-less, mass-spreader campaign events. And why did he do it? Because it would look great on TV for his reelection campaign. Never mind if they got COVID.

But what we don't like to admit to ourselves is that it's starting to feel like we're trapped in a perpetual pandemic. COVID's omicron variant has swept across America, filling hospitals almost entirely with those who never got their free vaccinations and boosters.

This past month, millions of Americans were unable to get a rapid-result test to know if it would be safe to spend the holidays with their loved ones. Pharmacies ran out of tests. A friend of mine in Connecticut searched all the chain pharmacies he could find—and finally found one independent store that had one box of 25 kits—at a cost of \$650. He could afford it, but millions can't.

Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa., told a story on TV of going home to her district but being unable to find a home test. "I drove 30 miles," she said. Finally she found a place where she paid \$145 and got tested. "Everybody can't do that," she said. "Here in America we have to have free testing for everyone, available to our homes or in pop-up locations, available to all."

President Joe Biden realized his administration failed to stockpile tests months ago, when they thought they had COVID in check. He ordered his team to get 500 million produced and made publicly available—they'll be ready next month. Last week, I wrote about how Biden's White House spokesperson bristled at a reporter's question about the failure to have tests available. I noted the Biden I've long known would probably say he wished his team had planned for the worst and stockpiled tests for an emergency.

Indeed, that's just what Biden said, several times in the next days. In a virtual meeting with the nation's governors on Monday, he told them his government's job was to get governors what they needed to keep their people safe.

"Seeing how tough it was for some folks to get a test this weekend shows that we have more work to do, and we're doing it. ... When I took office ... we were 10 months into the pandemic and, even so, we had no—zero—over-the-counter home

By MARTIN SCHRAM

Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.



tests in the United States. ... We went from no over-the-counter tests in January to 46 million in October, 100 million in November, and almost 200 million in December. But it's not enough. It's clearly not enough. If I had—we had known, we would have gone harder, quicker ..."

Thursday, CNN's Jake Tapper said America has suffered from a shortage of tests ever since COVID arrived. "This is a failure by the Trump administration and the Biden administration," Tapper said. But actually, Biden's approach to testing was quite different from his predecessor's. Donald Trump didn't like testing—because tests produced numbers that would be all over the news media, reminding voters that COVID wasn't being solved, as he had promised it would be.

In December, the number of children hospitalized with COVID skyrocketed to record highs. Some were too young to be vaccinated; but many had parents who refused vaccination. For many of those parents, it had become a political thing.

And we know the bottom-line truth about too many of us: An estimated 20% of America's adults have said no to getting their COVID vaccinations, even though they've been told they would be at high risk of becoming infected with COVID and passing it on to others including innocent, unvaccinated children. But they refused anyway. Just because, politically, it made them feel good to just say a strong "no" to being vaccinated.

From time to time I have noted that we could use a return visit by comic strip legend Walt Kelly's 1950s and '60s classic swamp possum and satirist, Pogo. For if he watched a news screen this past year, he would undoubtedly utter, one last time, his classic observation: "We have met the enemy and he is us!"

And as we rid ourselves of 2021—a woebegone year that began with Donald's Trumpers trying to destroy our democracy and ended with pro-Trump anti-vaxxers infecting and hospitalizing record numbers of children—we all would know who Pogo was talking about.

Navy decisions pertaining to Guam, Marianas

Sumay, Guam will be home to the U.S. Navy's Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility detachment. The Navy has been working on this project for several years. The Navy's desire to establish a maintenance detachment facility is to enhance and upkeep nuclear-powered submarines and tender support vessels currently homeported at the ancient village of Sumay. This facility is expected to be completed around 2028 or six years from now.

With the recent at-sea USS *Connecticut* collision in the South China Sea, the Navy needs to further expand and develop its onsite resource and skill set base to respond more swiftly and effectively to planned and emergent ship vessel maintenance needs. The Navy has experienced a host of at-sea accidents throughout the 7th Fleet's area of responsibility, all taking place not far from the Marianas.

Navy accidents that have occurred over the past 20 years include a surface vessel running aground in Tokyo Bay, several surface vessels colliding with tug boats, fishing vessels, and oil tankers in East Asia, the USS *San Francisco* getting into an underwater collision near Guam, the USS *Greeneville* running aground on Saipan, and now the USS *Connecticut* submarine, which had to limp from the South China Sea over to Guam.

Why the Mariana Islands, why now?

Guam has one of the world's most prized naval submarine bases located in our ancient village of Sumay, which was taken from our families without our prior, formal, or written consent. Evidence of Sumay's value to the Navy is that our village is now homeport to five nuclear-powered attack submarines, an inordinate concentration of American undersea naval firepower by

almost any unit of measure.

Today, the Northern Mariana Islands plays a pivotal and priceless role for the United States from the standpoint of great power geomilitary American-Sino politics. Our ancient village of Sumay and northern Guam lands, along with several other Northern Islands, are continually viewed by the Pentagon as invaluable.

Mariana Islands shipyard detachment and things for our Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization to consider

Current Pentagon resources in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands are inadequate to fully maintain nuclear-powered submarines and surface vessels. The Navy thinks that Guam needs more resources to meet ship maintenance work requirements, which the writer agrees with. Having a Guam-based detachment will further broaden ongoing submarine warfare activities that include training simulations and performance monitoring, which will also benefit those who work on the tenders.

The Navy has four public shipyards located in the East Coast, West Coast, and Hawaii. The establishment of a Guam shipyard maintenance detachment is a significant development for the Pentagon. A variety of Navy organizations responsible for facility construction, compliance with existing environmental laws, and the delivery of technical knowledge, continue to work together on this detachment project.

The Guam detachment will support almost 600 employees, mostly military personnel. The basis behind Guam being a part of the Pearl Harbor shipyard as opposed to being not associated with Pearl Harbor is that Guam-based employees will be able to seek technical, financial, and human resource support more

RICK'S COLUMN

By RICK PEREZ

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called *Guam Affairs* at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.

readily from the Navy.

Chamorro Pacific Islanders have the need to know more information about the Guam detachment

We have the need-to-know what job development pipelines are in place or are going to be put into place that focus on developing the skills to hire villagers to hold all positions at this shipyard. We have the need to know how much solid and liquid waste will be produced from all work that will take place at the Guam detachment. We have the need to know what other risks to the total environment will be introduced from having a new ship maintenance facility.

Will the Guam detachment have a dual or triple use for the Navy? Will the Guam detachment also be used to support testing combat systems, ordnance and/or diving related actions? Will the Guam detachment establish and maintain a constant level of work for its civilian workers and sailors?

Pandemic poems

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

I thought these words written 1,900 years ago seemed quite apropos for air travel in and out of the CNMI and relevant to COVID variant vaccinations and boosters:

"Will either passengers, or patients, find fault and complain, either the one if they be well carried, or the others if well cured? Do they take care for any more than this; the one, that their shipmaster may bring them safe to land, and the others that their physician may effect their recovery?"

— Marcus Aurelius, Stoic philosopher and Roman emperor from 161 to 180 A.D. (born April 26, 121AD., died March 17, 180 A.D.)

Variants: Out with Old & in with New

Variants: Out with the old and in with the new SARS-CoV-2 is an RNA virus called COVID 19 how many mutations before this year is through some easily transmitted some deadly and mean

the numbers with positive test results rise despite more vaccinations and booster shots as the latest in COVID variants defies pandemic death still casts multiple lots

epidemiologists fight daily battles governments, countries change protocol for travels as families worldwide fear hearing death's rattles which variant statistics and data unravels

to fly or not to fly that is the question whether tis nobler to follow Dr. Fauci or false science quack remedy suggestion and be anti vax anti mask and grouchy

to spread or not to spread COVID is a fairly simple task social distance: learn the correct way to wear a mask if new variants mean booster shot strength wanes get in line for another booster jab in your veins

Don't let anti vax and anti mask negatives chafe. For the world, yourself, your loved ones Stay Safe.

Editor's Note: Gov. Ralph DLG Torres issued on Friday the following statement regarding the bonus payments for retirees:

I want to make one thing clear. There is nothing political about wanting to give our retirees a well-deserved bonus for their sacrifices and everything they have done. We have done this in the past. In 2017, we gave our retirees a bonus. In 2018, we gave our retirees a bonus right before Super Typhoon Yutu. In 2019 and 2020, unfortunately, we were unable to give our retirees their bonuses due to our economic conditions as a result of our post-typhoon recovery and the ongoing pandemic, respectively. I am happy that this year, 2021, we have the resources to give our retirees a bonus once more. I have discussed this with Department of Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig, who has confirmed that the funds can be used for our retirees.

As I have mentioned previously, both the Office of the Attorney General and NMI Settlement Fund trustee Joyce Tang have communicated with the secretary of Finance and I about the best course of action to give our retirees this bonus. Before the bonus can be paid to our retirees, the Legislature needs to pass the joint resolution.

To insinuate that I am "exploiting retirees" or "playing a political game" is an incredible insult to the public servants who served before us. You are insulting their years of hard work, and after all the challenges of the past few years, you are denying them this bonus. I am not playing games with people's lives. I am trying to take care of our retirees, who have been a priority

Statement on retiree bonus joint resolution

The Department of Finance's ability to distribute the bonus payments for retirees is reliant upon the joint resolution that will allow Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to reprogram the \$1.3 million that will be allocated for each retiree's \$500 bonus.

The governor only has 25% reprogramming authority, as per the current budget act, Public Law 22-08. If there is no program that is already funded in the current budget, then Gov. Torres cannot just create a program to fund it. In the budget for fiscal year 2022, there are no current funds that allow for retiree bonuses.

In discussions with the Attorney General's Office and NMI Settlement Fund trustee Joyce Tang, Gov. Torres and I were advised on the procedure to give retirees this bonus, which is the joint resolution.

The joint resolution between the Senate and the House of Representatives to allow Gov. Torres the reprogramming authority to create a business unit within the current budget, which would allocate \$1.3 million from the Executive Branch to our retirees, was decided as the most appropriate plan.

To clarify, we are neither increasing nor reducing the current budget level. Furthermore, the funds for this retiree bonus will use the budget allocations from the Office of the Governor and

By RALPH DLG TORRES

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

since the beginning of my administration.

To our retirees, I want to apologize for the delay in getting you your bonuses. This is an unfortunate situation, because we all know that you all deserve this bonus after what we have been through as a Commonwealth these past years. It is sad to hear public officials call this political, when the intention of my administration is to give you, our retirees, a well-deserved bonus. This is something we have been doing, before Super Typhoon Yutu and the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a priority of my administration to pay what is due to our retirees.

I commend the Department of Finance and those in our Legislature who have supported and prioritized our retirees. I want to thank the House minority for their continued dedication to ensuring that our retirees are taken care of, and joining me in this effort. I urge our other legislators to consider our retirees, their livelihoods, and their families this holiday season.

By DAVID DLG ATALIG

Special to the Saipan Tribune








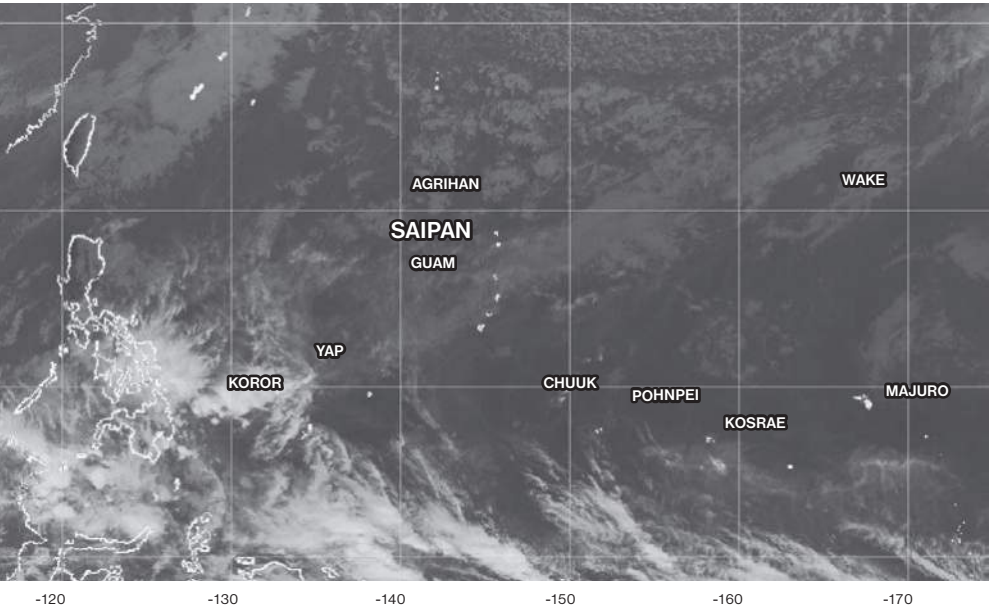
the Department of Finance, and not from any other program.

Because the governor does not have 100% reprogramming authority, based on the current budget act, we cannot disburse the retiree bonuses. We are simply asking that the governor is given the reprogramming authority to allow our retirees to be paid.

This administration prioritizes the retirees of our Commonwealth. As much as we would like to give our retirees their \$500 bonuses immediately, due to Public Law 22-08, the current budget act, the governor is not able to reprogram the funding for this bonus. I want to reaffirm the importance of the passing of this joint resolution, which will allow us to give our retirees the \$500 they deserve.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Breezy. Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy. A 10 percent chance of light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with scattered showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	75°	87°	76°	85°	75°	85°	75°	85°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:39 AM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Mostly cloudy skies with moderate to fresh winds prevail across the Marianas this morning. A shear line is evident on satellite pushing into Saipan and Tinian. Ipan buoy shows seas between 4 and 5 feet, while altimetry shows seas between 5 and 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.


Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor



onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

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MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Monday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Tuesday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Wednesday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:01 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Monday	7:00 AM	6:28 PM	-
Tuesday	8:03 AM	7:35 PM	-
Wednesday	8:59 AM	8:38 PM	-
Thursday	9:48 AM	9:38 PM	-
Friday	10:32 AM	10:32 PM	-

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily	1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily	1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily	TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
ROTA TO GUAM				2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable	2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

BUSINESS BRIEFS

New year brings more canceled flights for air travelers

For air travelers, the new year picked up where the old one left off—with lots of frustration. By late Saturday afternoon on the East Coast, more than 2,600 U.S. flights and nearly 4,600 worldwide had been canceled, according to tracking service FlightAware. That is the highest single-day U.S. toll yet since just before Christmas, when airlines began blaming staffing shortages on increasing COVID-19 infections among crews. More than 12,000 U.S. flights have been canceled since Dec. 24. Saturday’s disruptions weren’t just due to the virus, however. Wintry weather made Chicago—where forecasts called for 9 inches (23 centimeters) of snow—the worst place in the country for travelers. More than 800 flights were scrubbed at O’Hare Airport and more than 250 at Midway Airport. (AP)

US Postal Service recovers from poor holiday showing in 2020

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—The U.S Postal Service pulled out all the stops to avoid a repeat of the 2020 holiday shipping disaster, and it worked.

The Postal Service and several other private shippers reported that holiday season deliveries went smoothly for the most part. ShipMatrix, which analyzes shipping package data, reported that 96.9% of the Postal Service’s shipments were on time during a two-week period in December. Overall, it was a major improvement across the board compared with last year, when more than a third of first-class mail was late by the time Christmas arrived. “We’re happy to have brought all of the good holiday cheer that we could,” said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal workers.

Chinese factory activity edges higher in December

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese factory activity edged higher in December as supply disruptions eased and export demand weakened, a survey showed Friday. The monthly purchasing managers’ index issued by the national statistics agency and an industry group gained to 50.3 from November’s 50.1 on a 100-point scale on which numbers above 50 show activity accelerating. Chinese manufacturing has been hampered by

shortages of some components including semiconductors and disruptions in shipping. Some areas ordered factories to shut down temporarily starting in September to meet official energy efficiency targets. A measure of new orders improved to 49.7 from November’s 49.4, according to the China Federation of Logistics & Purchasing and the National Bureau of Statistics, though demand still was weak. An index of export orders sank to 48.1 from 48.5.

Airline trade group seeks delay in 5G communications launch

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. airlines are asking the Federal Communications Commission to delay next week’s scheduled rollout of new 5G wireless service near dozens of major airports, saying it could interfere with electronics that pilots rely on. Airlines for America, a trade group for large U.S. passenger and cargo carriers, said in an emergency filing that the FCC has failed to adequately consider the harm that 5G service could do to the industry. The group wants more time for the FCC and the Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates airlines, to resolve issues around aviation safety related to a type of 5G service called C-Band.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-013

Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies and materials necessary to complete the scope of work which consists of the installation of sewer gravity mains, manholes, sewer laterals and connections to the new sewer system, connection to the existing sewer on Isa Drive, concrete encasement of new sewer mains, utility crossings, restoration of site pavement, temporary soil erosion control, temporary traffic control, and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer and water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **\$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 12, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “**CUC-IFB-22-013, Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains**” to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 1, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 18, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-001

KOBLERVILLE SEWERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Koblerville Sewerline Extension Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “**CUC-IFB-22-001, Koblerville Sewer Line Extension Project**” to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 11, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Performance Bond of *one hundred percent (100%)* of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of *one hundred percent (100%)* of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission’s (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 30, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC’s Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior, Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-009

PAU PAU BEACH 2-INCH WATERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new main waterline and lateral service line; connection to the existing waterline; installation of gate valve assembly, PRV and PSV, flush hydrants, air release valves, fire hydrant assembly; existing lateral service tap relocation; restoration of existing asphalt concrete road; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 13, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “**CUC-IFB-22-009, Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension Project**”, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 2, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel H. Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Mrs. Marcela Tenorio Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Assistant – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Nation

Officials: Nearly 1K structures destroyed in Colorado fire

SUPERIOR, Colo. (AP)—A Colorado official says nearly 1,000 homes and other structures were destroyed, hundreds more were damaged, and three people are missing after a wildfire charred numerous neighborhoods in a suburban area at the base of the Rocky Mountains.

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle also said Saturday that investigators are still trying to find the cause of the wind-whipped blaze that erupted Thursday and blackened entire neighborhoods in the area located between Denver and Boulder.

Pelle said utility officials found no downed power lines around where the fire broke out. He said authorities were pursuing a number of tips and had executed a search warrant at “one particular location.” He declined to give details.

A sheriff’s official who declined to provide his name confirmed that one property was under investigation in Boulder County’s Marshall Mesa area, a region of open grassland about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) west of the hard-hit town of Superior. A National Guard Humvee blocked access to the property, which was only one of several under investigation, the official said.



AP
A lone flame flickers as smoke roils from the remains of a home destroyed by a pair of wildfires, Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, in Superior, Colo.

The totals given by Pelle include destroyed barns, outbuildings and other structures, but the vast majority were homes, Boulder County spokesperson Jennifer Churchill said late Saturday.

Officials had previously estimated that at least 500

homes—and possibly 1,000—were destroyed in the fire, which by Friday was no longer a threat. Residents have slowly started returning to see the scale of the devastation.

Authorities had said earlier no one was missing. But Churchill said that was due

to confusion inherent when agencies are scrambling to manage an emergency.

Pelle said officials were organizing cadaver teams to search for the missing in the Superior area and in unincor-

porated Boulder County. The task is complicated by debris from destroyed structures covered by 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow dumped by a storm overnight, he said.

At least 991 homes and oth-

er buildings were destroyed, Pelle said: 553 in Louisville, 332 in Superior and 106 in unincorporated parts of the county. Pelle cautioned that the tally was not final.

At least seven people were injured in the wildfire that erupted in and around Louisville and Superior, neighboring towns about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Denver with a combined population of 34,000. It burned at least 9.4 square miles (24 square kilometers).

The snow and temperatures in the single digits cast an eerie scene amid still-smoldering remains of homes. Despite the shocking change in weather, the smell of smoke still permeated empty streets blocked off by National Guard troops in Humvees.

The conditions compounded the misery of residents who started off the new year trying to salvage what remained of their homes.

Canucks employee says thanks to fan through viral letter

SEATTLE (AP)—Brian “Red” Hamilton was in the middle of moving equipment on the Vancouver Canucks’ bench in between periods on Oct. 23 in Seattle when he noticed a woman behind the bench pressing her phone against the plexiglass.

The message on her phone was written in a large font and caught the attention of Hamilton, the assistant equipment manager for the Canucks. The message expressed Nadia Popovici’s concern that she believed a mole on the back of Hamilton’s neck was cancerous and that he needed to get it checked.

It turned out she was right.

“I felt bad at the moment because I’m walking off the bench and she put her phone up to the glass and on the phone it said the mole on the back of your neck is cancer. And it threw me off,” Hamilton recalled on Saturday before the Canucks played their second game of the season in Seattle. “So I kind of just shrugged and kept going. My initial response when I found out was I felt bad because I felt like I didn’t really give her the time of day. I’m excited that she knows because she needs to know.”



Seattle Kraken fan Nadia Popovici poses for a photo before an NHL hockey game between the Kraken and the Vancouver Canucks, Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, in Seattle. Popovici is showing the text of a message she showed to Canucks assistant equipment manager Brian “Red” Hamilton on Oct. 23, 2021, as she sat behind the Canucks’ bench during the Kraken’s home-opener hockey game. **AP**

The Canucks posted a letter from Hamilton on Saturday retelling the story of how all this played out and expressing his thanks and desire to meet the woman in question. Within barely an hour, both the Canucks and Seattle Kraken said the 22-year-old Popovici had been contacted after spending New Year’s Eve working at a crisis hotline. The pair were able to meet about 90 minutes before the Kraken and Canucks played on Saturday night.

“The fact that I got to look

him in the eye and hear what happened from his perspective,” said Popovici, who graduated from the University of Washington and intends to attend medical school in the next year. “Imagine how jarring that is to for you to be at work and someone just kind of looks at you and says, ‘Hey, maybe you go see a doctor.’ That’s not what you want to hear. So the fact that I got to see him and talk to his family members that have been really impacted by him dodging a big bullet that’s so special.”

ACROSS THE NATION

Crews rescue 21 people on stuck tram cars in New Mexico

New Mexico search and rescue crews used ropes and helicopters Saturday to rescue 21 people who were stranded overnight in two tram cars after an iced-over cable caused the cars to get stuck high up in the Sandia Mountains overlooking Albuquerque. Lt. Robert Arguillas a Bernalillo County Fire Department spokesperson, said early Saturday afternoon that crews first rescued 20 people stranded in one car and several hours later rescued a 21st person stranded by themselves in a second car. All the people on the two cars were employees of the Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway or a mountaintop restaurant, and the 20 in one car were being ferried down to the base of the mountains at the end of their workdays, Arguillas said. **(AP)**

Kentucky storm brings flooding, lost power, possible tornado

HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency on Saturday as powerful storms ripped through the state causing flash floods, power outages and property damage, including from a possible tornado in Hopkinsville. There were no immediate reports of any injuries or deaths. The storms come just three weeks after deadly tornadoes tore through the region, killing more than 90 people in five states, including 77 in Kentucky. As of Saturday night, much of Kentucky and West Virginia were under a flood warning. Portions of eastern Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were under a tornado watch.

3 dead, 4 hurt in shooting at Mississippi New Year’s party

GULFPORT, Miss. (AP)—Three people were killed and four others were wounded after several people at a Mississippi party started shooting just minutes before the end of 2021, authorities said. No arrests have been made in the shooting at a Gulfport New Year’s party in part because investigators are piecing together a chaotic scene where more than 50 bullets were fired from several guns but also because the people who saw the shooting and some of the wounded aren’t talking to officers, Gulfport Police Chief Chris Ryle said. “I understand their mentality. They don’t want to be seen a snitches in public. But we have a phone line they are more than welcome to call,” Ryle said at a Saturday news conference. One person remained in critical condition and three others who were wounded are expected to recover, according to police, who responded to 911 calls at 11:58 p.m. Friday.

Colorado governor slashes trucker’s prison term to 10 years

DENVER (AP)—Colorado Gov. Jared Polis on Thursday shortened the prison sentence of a truck driver convicted in a deadly crash to 10 years, drastically reducing his original 110-year term that drew widespread outrage. The decision on Rogel Aguilera-Mederos’ sentence was among several year-end commutations and pardons issued by Polis. The move comes days after a judge scheduled a hearing for next month to reconsider the sentence at the request of the district attorney, who planned to ask that it be reduced to 20 to 30 years. Around 5 million people signed an online petition seeking clemency for Aguilera-Mederos, who was convicted of vehicular homicide and other charges in the explosive 2019 pileup that killed four people.

Asia

DESPERATION OF AFGHANISTAN

Parents selling children

SHEDAI CAMP, Afghanistan (AP)—In a sprawling settlement of mud brick huts in western Afghanistan housing people displaced by drought and war, a woman is fighting to save her daughter.

Aziz Gul's husband sold the 10-year-old girl into marriage without telling his wife, taking a down-payment so he could feed his family of five children. Without that money, he told her, they would all starve. He had to sacrifice one to save the rest.

Many of Afghanistan's growing number of destitute people are making desperate decisions such as these as their nation spirals into a vortex of poverty.

The aid-dependent country's economy was already teetering when the Taliban seized power in mid-August amid a chaotic withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops. The international community froze Afghanistan's assets abroad and halted all funding, unwilling to work with a Taliban government given its reputation for brutality during its previous rule 20 years ago.

The consequences have been devastating for a country battered by four decades of war, a punishing drought and the coronavirus pandemic. Legions of state employees, including doctors, haven't been paid in months. Malnutrition and poverty stalk the most vulnerable, and aid groups say more than half the population faces acute food shortages.

"Day by day, the situation is deteriorating in this country, and especially children



Qandi Gul holds her brother outside their home housing those displaced by war and drought near Herat, Afghanistan. Dec. 16, 2021.

are suffering," said Asuntha Charles, national director of the World Vision aid organization in Afghanistan, which runs a health clinic for displaced people just outside the western city of Herat.

"Today I have been heartbroken to see that the families are willing to sell their children to feed other family members," Charles said. "So it's the right time for the humanitarian community to stand up and stay with the people of Afghanistan."

Arranging marriages for very young girls is a frequent practice throughout the region. The groom's family—often distant relatives—pays money to seal the deal, and the child usually stays with her own parents until she is at least around 15 or 16. Yet with many unable to afford even basic food, some say they'd allow prospective grooms to take very young girls or are even trying to sell their sons.

But Gul, unusually in this deeply patriarchal, male-

dominated society, is resisting. Married off herself at 15, she says she would kill herself if her daughter, Qandi Gul, is forcibly taken away.

Gul remembers well the moment she found out her husband had sold Qandi. For around two months, the family had been able to eat. Eventually, she asked her husband where the money came from, and he told her.

"My heart stopped beating. I wished I could have died at that time, but maybe God didn't want me to die," Gul said. Qandi sat close to her mother, her hazel eyes peering shyly from beneath her sky-blue headscarf. "Each time I remember that night ... I die and come back to life. It was so difficult."

She asked her husband why he did it.

"He said he wanted to sell one and save the others. 'You all would have died this way,' (he said.) I told him, 'Dying was much better than what you have done.'"

12 dead in crowd surge at Kashmir shrine

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—A crowd surge at a popular Hindu shrine in Indian-controlled Kashmir killed at least 12 people and injured 15 others on New Year's Day, officials said.

Initial reports suggested an altercation between a group of devotees led to the crush early Saturday at the Mata Vaishnav Devi shrine, where tens of thousands of Hindus gathered to pay respects in the hilly town of Katra near southern Jammu city.

"Something happened near one of the gates and I found myself under a crush of people. I suffocated and fell but somehow managed to stand up," said Mahesh, who gave only one name.

"I saw people moving over the bodies. It was a horrifying sight, but I managed to

help in rescuing some injured people," he said.

Press Trust of India news agency quoted police chief Dilbag Singh as saying that authorities were quick to respond and the order within the crowd was immediately restored.

The pilgrimage resumed after nearly four hours, officials said. An investigation was underway.

Another devotee named Priyansh said he and 10 friends from New Delhi arrived Friday night to visit the shrine. He said two of his friends died in the crush.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences in a message on Twitter.

"Extremely saddened by the loss of lives due to a stampede," Modi wrote.

Pilgrims often trek on foot to reach the hilltop temple, which is one of the most visited shrines in northern India.

Deadly crowd surges are fairly common during Indian religious festivals where huge gatherings, sometimes in the millions, cover small areas with few safety or control measures.

In 2013, pilgrims visiting a temple for a popular Hindu festival in central Madhya Pradesh state trampled over each other amid fears that a bridge would collapse, and at least 115 people were crushed to death or died in the river below.

More than 100 Hindu devotees died in a 2011 crush at a religious festival in the southern state of Kerala.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

El Salvador nabs 4.1 tons of cocaine in 2 semi-submersibles

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP)—El Salvador's navy seized two semi-submersible boats carrying 4.1 metric tons of cocaine off the country's Pacific coast, the government said Friday. President Nayib Bukele said the cocaine was worth almost \$104 million. It was the largest seizure so far in Bukele's administration, which began in June 2019. The navy detained five Colombians and two Ecuadorians found aboard the two vessels, officials said. Much of the illegal drug flow headed for the U.S. market passes by air or sea to Central America, and then on to Mexico. Semi-submersibles are not true submarines, but rather are boats that have been built or modified to keep a very low profile in the water to make detection harder.

China opens embassy in Nicaragua for 1st time since 1990

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP)—China opened an embassy in Nicaragua on Friday for the first time since 1990, acting just over three weeks since President Daniel Ortega's government broke off relations with Taiwan. Foreign Minister Denis Moncada said there is an "ideological affinity" between the two countries. Moncada also thanked China for donating one million doses of the Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine. Ortega established relations with China in 1985, but after he lost the presidential election in 1990, the government of Nicaragua's new president, Violeta Chamorro, recognized Taiwan. The Nicaraguan government broke relations with the Taiwanese on Dec. 9 and last week it seized the former embassy and diplomatic offices of Taiwan, saying they belong to China. However, China's new embassy is located elsewhere, and it is unclear what China will do with the Taiwan building.

Pope on new year: Pandemic is hard, but focus on the good

VATICAN CITY (AP)—In his New Year's wishes to the world, Pope Francis encouraged people Saturday to focus on the good which unites them and decried violence against women while acknowledging that the coronavirus pandemic has left many scared and struggling amid economic inequality. "We are still living in uncertain and difficult times due to the pandemic," Francis said. "Many are frightened about the future and burdened by social problems, personal problems, dangers stemming from the ecological crisis, injustices and by global economic imbalances." Thousands of Rome residents and tourists, wearing face masks as protection against the spread of the coronavirus, gathered in St. Peter's Square on a sunny, mild day to hear Francis lay out his recipe for world peace, cheering his appearance.

Requiem for South Africa's Archbishop Tutu

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—Anglican Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has been remembered at a state funeral Saturday for his Nobel Peace Prize-earning role in ending South Africa's apartheid regime of racial oppression and for championing the rights of LGBTQ people. "When we were in the dark, he brought light," Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the head of the worldwide Anglican church, said in a video message shown at a requiem Mass celebrated for Tutu at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town. Tutu died last Sunday at age 90. His plain pine coffin,

the cheapest available at his request to avoid any ostentatious displays, was the center of the service, which also featured African choirs, prayers and incense.

NYE's fireworks kill men in Germany, Austria

BERLIN (AP)—Exploding fireworks killed two men on New Year's Eve, one in Germany and the other in Austria, local media reported Saturday. A 37-year-old man died in Hennef near Germany's western city of Bonn. A 39-year-old was severely injured in the same incident and taken to the hospital. In Austria, a 23-year-old man died southwest of Vienna and three other people were injured. At a private New Year's Eve party in Berlin, 12 people were injured when illegal fireworks exploded at night. Eleven of them were taken to hospitals for treatment, dpa reported. All were injured on their legs, a spokeswoman for Berlin's fire department said Saturday adding that the youngest injured was an 11-year-old boy.

French burn fewer cars on New Year's Eve due to pandemic

PARIS (AP)—Hundreds of empty, parked cars go up in flames in France each New Year's Eve, set afire by young revelers, a much lamented tradition that appeared in decline this year, which saw only 874 vehicles burned. The number of cars burned overnight has declined compared to New Year's Eve 2019 when 1,316 vehicles went up in flames, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Saturday on Twitter. Fewer arson attacks occurred because of massive police presence on cities' streets this New Year's Eve, enforcing law and order and restrictions on public gatherings and wearing face masks as infections driven by the fast-spreading omicron variant surge, he said.

Report: Clashes in southeast Iran kill 3 troops, 5 bandits

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and an armed criminal gang clashed on Saturday in a restive southeastern province, leaving three Guard members and "at least five bandits" dead, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. The report said the fighting took place late Saturday evening in the district of Kourin, about 1,120 kilometers (700 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran, and near the Pakistani border. It also said that at least five other bandits were wounded. There were no further details. The area is in Sistan and Baluchistan province, has been the scene of occasional clashes between Iranian government forces and various militant groups. The province, bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, is also where a Sunni separatist group affiliated with al-Qaida and known as Jesh al-Adl, or Army of Justice, operates. Security forces have also clashed with drug traffickers in the province, located along a major smuggling route for Afghan opium and heroin.

Israeli jets hit militant targets in Gaza after rocket fire

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's military said early Sunday it launched strikes against militant targets in the Gaza Strip, a day after rockets were fired from the Hamas-ruled territory. Video filmed in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, showed three huge explosions and fighter jets could be heard flying overhead. There was no immediate confirmation on possible casualties. The Israeli military said the attacks targeted a rocket manufacturing facility and a military post for Hamas.

Health & Wellness

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Mo Golden, NASM CPT, works with Marcia Ouellette 80, of Upper Arlington at Personal Level Fitness on Lane Avenue on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. Ouellette, who walks the mile-and-a-half trip to and from the gym, has trained at Personal Level Fitness for the last thirteen years and appreciates their one-on-one business model. "If you don't do things right, you can hurt yourself, but I have to keep moving," said Ouellette.

Looking to keep up a New Year's resolution?

Experts say it's best to start small

By MICHAEL LEE
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

It's the start of 2022, which for many means once again setting New Year's resolutions.

According to a 2020 survey from comparison website Finder, 45.6% of 141.1 million American adults said they wanted to make health-related New Year's resolutions for 2021. But another 2020 survey from data analytics site YouGov found that 49% of people who made resolutions kept some but not all, while 16% did not keep any at all.

So for those who want to keep up their resolutions this year, experts say to start small.

What's in a New Year's resolution

Sophie Lazarus, a clinical psychologist at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center, said one of the biggest reasons why people make New Year's resolutions in the first place is that it's a "strong, cultural piece" in today's society.

She added that New Year's resolutions can be hard to stick with because in general, habits are powerful and that it's really hard to change behavior.

"There are just so many forces and responsibilities and pressures that make it very unrealistic that we have the capacity, the energy, to make a big change," she said.

And an overbearing pressure the

past couple of years? The COVID-19 pandemic.

Lazarus said the pandemic has made everyday decisions a lot more difficult and has disrupted people's ability to access things that often reinforce and support their moods, like in-person book clubs, exercise classes and even meetings at work.

"We were hoping if we just kind of held out long enough that they would return," she said. "But I think we're realizing we have to be adaptable, and find new and different sources of support and reinforcement for our mood, because things are not quite returning to exactly how they were."

And so when people fall off track from a habit, such as a resolution,

Lazarus said it can reinforce a problematic avoidance mindset. But it's best not to keep putting it off when you fall off track, she said.

"It reinforces this way of thinking of like, 'I fell off track with this habit, I'll just start next week, or I'll just start next month,'" Lazarus said. "Why not start fresh or start new in the next moment, ... 'So I fell off track here today, I'm going to start fresh this afternoon.'"

Starting small, setting goals

Lazarus said it's best for people to set smaller goals in the new year instead of large, sweeping resolutions.

Personal trainer Alexandra Craig agrees that smaller goals are the way to go. Craig is the owner of personal fitness gym Personal Level Fitness, just outside of Upper Arlington.

Her gym helps clients with setting long-term goals instead of resolutions like trying to lose 10 pounds in a month.

"I think they set themselves up to fail because they don't know where to start a lot of times," she said. "When people first do their New Year's resolutions, it's that short-term tunnel vision instead of, 'I'm going to work on this one thing, and then add, and add, and add and do more of a habit-based program.'"

She added that in order for people to keep up with these smaller goals, they can just make tweaks to their goals to make them more realistic.

"I always give people a 1 to 10 confidence scale. One is absolutely not, I am not going to climb Mount

Everest tomorrow, and 10 is like, 'Yeah, I can walk out to my car and grab my cellphone for you,' Craig said. "If you can't do it forever, then you probably shouldn't be doing it."

And that's the same for resolutions like healthy eating—keep the pressure low. In fact, local licensed dietitian Lindsey Mathes said not to focus on weight loss, as it can be dangerous.

Mathes, who focuses on preventing eating disorders and disordered eating with her clients, said things like diets don't work, and that healthy eating is more about a behavior change.

"The vast majority of eating disorders get started very innocently—there is a drive for feeling healthier, losing weight, and it flips a switch," she said.

Mathes said those who want to start healthy food habits in the New Year should contact an intuitive eating dietitian in order to overcome barriers—like emotional eating as a coping mechanism—that would prevent someone from making the changes they want.

But for those who cannot or do not want to, she said to read books like "Health at Every Size" by Linda Bacon so they can have a better understanding of what healthy eating means for their body.

"I want people to ultimately be educated, but to develop a sense of compassion toward themselves to get curious rather than be judgmental," she said. "Get started no matter how small it seems."

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Lead Trainer Megan Dressel works with a client at Personal Level Fitness on Lane Avenue.

Mental health and the holidays: Resolutions

By JOEL STREED
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

Q: The start of a new year stirs up thoughts of reflection and the desire for change. What are healthy resolutions, and what tips do you have for staying committed?

A: Change is hard, and new habits are much easier to make and then break because old patterns may be more familiar, comfortable and easy. Also, stress from the COVID-19 pandemic can make some resolutions more difficult to follow through on. For example, you might want to exercise more, but you're not comfortable working out in a crowded gym.

"This year may require extra

thought and planning about how to make a meaningful resolution work within the parameters of our new routines," says Lisa Hardesty, Ph.D., a Mayo Clinic Health System psychologist. "We may need to be more open and flexible, but positive changes are certainly possible with planning and dedication."

■ Take time to reflect. Planning a change in lifestyle and committing to resolutions takes time and energy. Set aside time to reflect on the lifestyle you want and the one you lead now. How will you dedicate time to planning and taking action? What insights have you had over the past two years that may lead you to a new and exciting future?

■ Have a solid plan with a simple

focus. It's hard to hit the ground running when you don't know where you're running to. That's why it's important to create an achievable, solid plan with small, achievable benchmarks before the new year is underway. People have a tendency to start with high energy and effort, and then lose that within approximately three months after starting. Creating small goals, celebrating minor successes, and building on those early wins will be much more sustainable over time.

■ Stay motivated. You will need internal and external motivation to keep you going. Begin with identifying your "why" for the change to stay focused on the meaning of your new imagined future. You also can use this "why" when you face unex-

pected barriers or start to fall back to old ways of thinking or behaving.

■ Build confidence. In addition to your "why," you will need to learn to be confident. Confidence is related to small goals and big celebrations. Being confident and patient are key factors to sticking with your resolution.

"Finally, sharing your goals with others is a great way to gain support, accountability and external motivation to continue," says Dr. Hardesty. "If you build internal and external motivation, and accountability, then you will think, feel and behave in ways that sustain success over time."

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HEALTHY LIVING

Want healthy gums?

Oleanolic acid, a chemical found in raisins, is particularly effective in killing oral bacteria.

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- Oleanolic acid prevents the growth of two kinds of bacteria that can cause gum disease
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Source: University of Illinois, TNS Photo Service

Life & Style

Betty White, TV's Golden Girl, dies at 99

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Betty White, whose saucy, up-for-anything charm made her a television mainstay for more than 60 years, whether as a man-crazy TV hostess on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” or the loopy housemate on “The Golden Girls,” has died. She was 99.

White's longtime agent and friend Jeff Witjas confirmed her death Friday. She had no diagnosed illness, and it was unclear if she died Thursday night or Friday, he said.

She would have turned 100 on Jan. 17.

Her death brought tributes

from celebrities and politicians alike.

“We loved Betty White,” first lady Jill Biden said as she left a Delaware restaurant with President Joe Biden, who added: “Ninety-nine years old. As my mother would say, God love her.”

“She was great at defying expectation,” Ryan Reynolds, who starred alongside her in the comedy “The Proposal,” tweeted. “She managed to grow very old and somehow, not old enough. We'll miss you, Betty.”

White launched her TV career in daytime talk shows when the medium was still



AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO, FILE
Actress Betty White poses for a portrait following her appearance on the television talk show “In the House,” in Burbank, Calif., Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2009.

sapped dude getting tackled during a backlot football game.

“Mike, you're playing like Betty White out there,” jeered one of his chums. White, flat on the ground and covered in mud, fired back, “That's not what your girlfriend said!”

The instantly-viral video helped spark a successful Facebook campaign to have her host “Saturday Night Live.” The much-watched episode won her a seventh Emmy.

A month later, cable's TV Land premiered “Hot In Cleveland,” which starred Valerie Bertinelli, Jane Leeves and Wendie Malick as three past-their-prime show-biz veterans who move to Cleveland to escape the youth obsession of Hollywood.

Tony Blair, Daniel Craig join scientists on UK Honors List

LONDON (AP)—Scientists and medical chiefs who have led Britain's response to the pandemic were awarded knighthoods Friday in the country's annual New Year Honors List, which recognized the achievements of hundreds of people from James Bond star Daniel Craig to teenage tennis star Emma Raducanu.

Queen Elizabeth II also made former Prime Minister Tony Blair a Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the oldest and most senior British order of chivalry.

In another year dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, officials said almost one in five of the honors were for coronavirus-related service. Chris Whitty and Jonathan Van-Tam, England's chief and deputy medical officers, were

awarded knighthoods. Jenny Harries, head of the U.K. Health Security Agency, and June Raine, chief executive of Britain's medicines regulatory body, were made dames.

In total, the Honors List recognized more than 1,200 people in the U.K. this year, including scientists, actors, politicians, Olympic athletes and people who worked to raise funds for charities.

Craig, who made his final outing as 007 in the blockbuster “No Time to Die,” was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George—the same honor given to the fictional Bond -- for his services to film and theater.

The title is often given to diplomats, and Bond was described as holding it in the film franchise and the books by Ian Fleming.

in its infancy and endured well into the age of cable and streaming. Her combination of sweetness and edginess gave life to a roster of quirky characters in shows from the sitcom

“Life With Elizabeth” in the early 1950s to oddball Rose Nylund in “The Golden Girls” in the '80s to “Boston Legal,” which ran from 2004 to 2008.

But it was in 2010 that

White's stardom erupted as never before.

In a Snickers commercial that premiered during that year's Super Bowl telecast, she impersonated an energy-

New Year's Rose Parade marches on despite COVID-19 surge

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—A year after New Year's Day passed without a Rose Parade due to the coronavirus pandemic, marching bands and floral floats took to the streets again to celebrate the arrival of 2022 despite a new surge of infections due to the omicron variant.

The 133rd edition of the Pasadena, California, tradition on Saturday featured actor LeVar Burton as grand marshal, 20 bands, 18 equestrian units and dozens of floats reflecting the theme of “Dream. Believe.

Achieve.”

After days of record-smashing rains, there were sunny skies for the 8 a.m. start of the spectacle, which has an uncanny history of postcard weather.

LeAnn Rimes kicked off the event with a performance of “Throw My Arms Around the World” followed by a military flyover of a B-2 stealth bomber.

Among the fanciful floats was the futuristic-themed “Vaccinate Our World” entry by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation with a robot nurse

clutching a syringe. The colorful “Rise, Shine and Read!” float by the UPS Store featured a bespectacled rooster reading to a group of chicks.

“American Idol” winner Laine Hardy performed aboard Louisiana's “Feed Your Soul” float. For the grand finale, the US Army Golden Knights parachute team landed along the parade route and country performer Jimmie Allen sang “Good Times Roll.”

The parade and the afternoon Rose Bowl football

game between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Utah Utes remained on track despite an explosion of COVID-19 infections in Los Angeles County, where daily new cases topped 27,000 on Friday.

The county Department of Public Health said it was the highest number of new cases.

The soaring infections had already prompted Kaiser Permanente to announce that its float, “A Healthier Future,” would not have 20 “front-line medical heroes” riding or walking alongside.

Couple's name game about to welcome a new player

DEAR ABBY: Our daughter has been married for three years to a wonderful guy she dated for 10 years and loves dearly. Because she doesn't like his last name, she chose to maintain her maiden name. He understood this soon after they started dating.

She's now three months pregnant and facing a dilemma about what to name their child. She's adamant that a hyphenated name is unacceptable. They have tentatively discussed a complete name change for themselves and the child. Her husband was adopted, and she feels there's no reason his surname must be carried on. He's OK with keeping his last name but would consider a new one if she suggests something he likes.

The problem is, she hasn't been able to come up with one he likes. We're concerned this issue will drag on without being settled until our grandchild arrives. We recently offered limited advice hoping they can work this out between themselves.

I believe her husband is entitled to keep his name, and she as well, but I'm against the child carrying only her name. Any suggestions you could provide to help resolve this would be appreciated before our grandchild is born nameless.

FAMILY DILEMMA IN TEXAS

DEAR FAMILY: My suggestion is that as helpful as you might wish to be, this is something your daughter and son-in-law must work out by themselves. “What's in a name”

is plenty, and because this dilemma is emotionally loaded, you should stay out of it.

DEAR ABBY: I'm undergoing chemo/immunotherapy for cancer every three weeks. For quite some time now, my husband has been going out most days from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. He does not say where he is going, and when he comes home, he says hardly a word. He is angry with me for the least little thing, and being around him gets very unpleasant because he shouts and throws things around.

I need to know what's going on, why, and if it is innocent—because he won't say where he's going and for what purpose. Am I justified in being upset and distressed about this? I am at a point in my life where I need support. I think we both should be more concerned with making our future enjoyable and peaceful.

How should I approach him about this without incurring more anger and putting myself in a worse situation than I am already in? I don't want to accuse him of anything, but I want to know the truth however hard it may be. I would appreciate any guidance you can give me.

SUSPICIOUS IN NEW YORK

DEAR SUSPICIOUS: Has this been going on since you were diagnosed, or do your husband's absences predate

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

it? Because he becomes angry and defensive when you ask what is going on, stop trying to confront him. Your husband may be angry with you for getting cancer, be incapable of giving emotional support or be stressed to the max and need private time to decompress. Or he may be cheating.

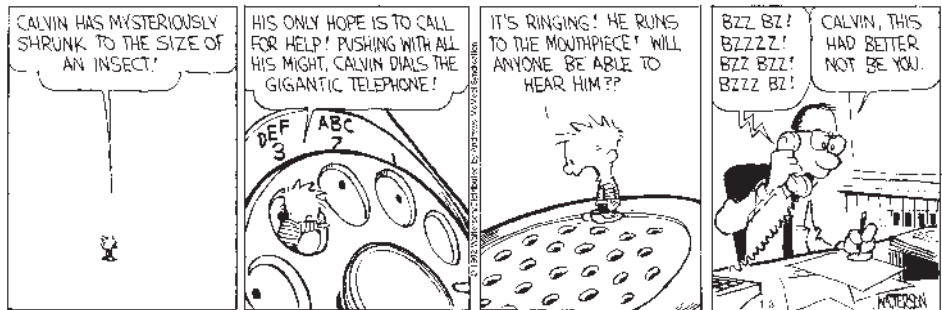
If you can afford it, hire a private detective to provide the information you need. I am so sorry for your pain. At a time like this, the last thing you needed was additional worry.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: “Abby's Favorite Recipes” and “More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbook-let Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



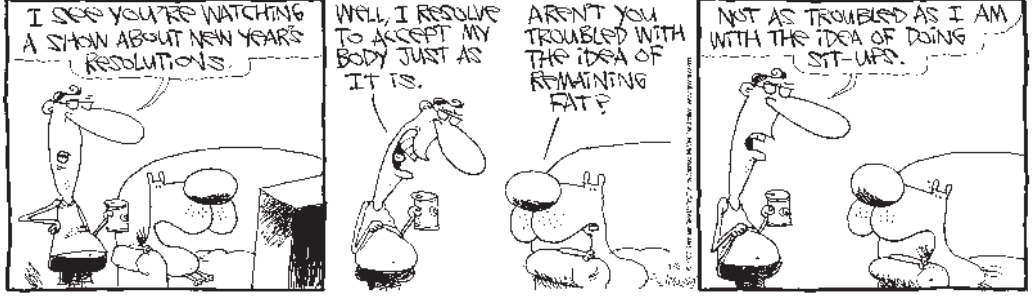
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Muscat's land
5 Droid
8 —
12 Squid dish
14 Crowd noise
15 Earring shape, often
16 Rock's Mötley —
17 Little louse
18 Great —
20 Spiral
23 Cannon of film
24 Sofa brand
25 Cake mixes
28 Links org.
29 Los —, California
30 Satisfied sigh
32 "Say something!"
34 "Alfred" composer

DOWN

1 Calendar abbr.
35 Flower part
36 Run-down
37 Sudden bursts
40 Aachen article
41 Dog's bowlful
42 Fly at a low altitude
47 Grate
48 Points of view
49 Pro votes
50 Bit of butter
51 Regimen

2 Actress West
3 Pie — mode
4 Land created by C.S. Lewis
5 Lisa's brother
6 Spanish gold
7 Apex
8 Esoteric
9 Chicago's Mayor
10 Mythic man-goat
11 War god
13 1509, to Cato
19 Back muscles, for short
20 Trendy
21 Heart charts
22 Bound
23 Fact
25 Pastry store
26 Scarce
27 Hourglass fill
29 Portal
31 "Psst!"
33 Prevents, legally
34 Virgil epic
36 Billboard
37 Poet
38 Theater production
39 Church section
40 Work on proofs
43 Clean air org.
44 — polloi
45 Single
46 Calif. clock setting

Solution time: 25 mins.

B	E	A	R	S	I	S	T	M	A	N
E	D	G	E	N	A	N	H	A	L	O
B	E	O	F	A	N	O	D	E	R	
C	N	G	U	L	F	W	N	E		
S	A	T	A	Y	E	A	U	V	A	
T	E	A	L	C	A	Y	M	E	L	T
O	R	R	H	A	T	P	A	R	S	E
W	O	R	K	S	F	O	R	M	E	
S	I	G	N	A	I	N	T	A	S	S
R	O	O	D	N	O	D	R	E	M	I
A	N	V	A	S	O	Y	O	A	S	T

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eli Manning, 41; Danica McKellar, 47; Mel Gibson, 66; Victoria Principal, 72.

Happy Birthday: Take hold of situations and boldly move forward. A change that lightens emotional or financial stress will give you a new lease on life and encourage an overhaul that will contribute to a healthier future. Envision what you want and turn it into a reality. Don't let anyone push you in a direction that doesn't suit your needs. Your numbers are 6, 13, 22, 26, 37, 43, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll have to be sharp if you want to avoid trouble. Leave nothing to chance or up to someone who tends to be irresponsible. Stay focused on what you want to achieve, and don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. **

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Confusion will set in if you let someone manipulate a situation. Be vocal, and follow through by delivering the goods. It's up to you to set a standard, not succumb to someone competing with you. Self-improvement is encouraged. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Trust and believe in what you know and do best. Refuse to let anyone railroad you into something you don't want to pursue. You can push your way forward with a positive attitude, enthusiasm and living up to your promises. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): A positive change will develop if you use your ingenuity and branch out in a creative and trendy direction. Take a step forward, and you'll gain respect and the support you require to reach

your goal. Romance is favored. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Put more effort into partnerships and getting along with the people you need in your corner to accomplish your goals. Diplomacy will fetch better results than force. Speak from the heart and offer to meet halfway, or uncertainty will prevail. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Get out, network and gain experience. See the world through someone else's eyes, and you will gain perspective regarding what's possible. Refuse to let domestic situations escalate into an unnecessary feud. Keep the peace and be responsible. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A passionate approach will be required if you want to overcome the trials and tribulations that joint ventures offer. Getting along with the people you deal with will warrant compromise and honesty. Be direct and offer incentives; you will make headway. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Keep moving in a direction that offers satisfaction and makes you proud. What you can contribute can make a difference and will eventually be recognized by your peers. It's OK to think and do things differently. Live life your way. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Put your energy where it brings the highest returns. Hard work will pay off and help you recognize and say no to unreliable outside influences. Do the work and reap the rewards. Act on facts, not assumptions. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A practical outlook will keep persuasive people from trying to manipulate you. Sticking to what feels comfortable will encourage better results and eliminate unnecessary stress. Know your limitations, protect your assets and do what's best for you. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't be shy. Look at what's possible, and dig in and do your best. Observing what others do will be a learning experience. Do your research, and initiate your plans with confidence. Walk away from pushy people trying to enforce unreasonable compromises. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Dig in and make a difference. Put your finger on the pulse, and make moves that encourage others to support your efforts. Steer clear of anyone who tries to mislead you. A healthy attitude and doing your research will pay off. ****

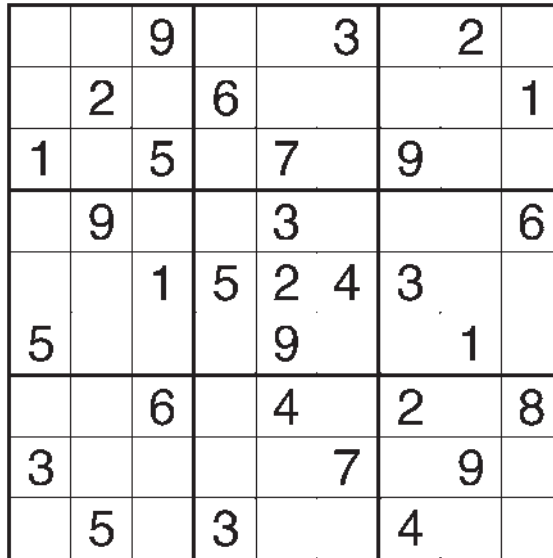
Birthday Baby: You are productive, intuitive and helpful. You are brave and dependable.

☾ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼ Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

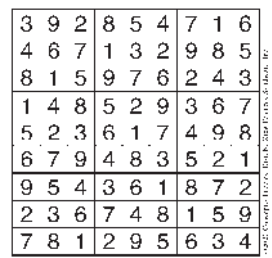
Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



Difficulty Level ★ 1/03
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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

GETTING A HEAD START

Solution: 7 letters

H M C K N I H T I F E N E B S
S O O E T U N I M O N T H D I
I R M P R E P A R E P B N A N
L N P E L E C A R R E O E P S
P I E A W E R I O F C T R P I
M N T E M O P G O E A O E L G
O G I T A S R R S R M V R Y H
C C T A N A E K T P I A U G T
C L I I M N V N T T E N G E A
A A O F I B E I C Y N N S T C
R S N T F C I E T R I H M A T
E S U I N A J T A C O T I R I
E O R O N B R E I U A A A T C
R S C H O O L T R O P P U S S
T C E J O R P R O T N E M G K

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Accomplish, Activate, Aims, Ambition, Apply, Before, Benefit, Career, Class, Competition, Concentrate, First, Game, Homework, Hour, Insight, Inspire, Learn, Mentor, Minute, Month, Morning, Objective, Path, Prepare, Program, Project, Prompt, Race, Routine, School, Seconds, Strategy, Support, Tactics, Talent, Task, Think, Time, Traffic, Year
Last Friday's Answer: Fancy
To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Warriors rally in the 4th quarter for 123-116 win over Jazz



SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Stephen Curry scored 28 points and had nine assists to lead the Golden State Warriors to a 123-116 win over the Utah Jazz on Saturday.

Andrew Wiggins had 25 points for the Warriors, while Otto Porter Jr. had 20 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. Andre Iguodala added 12 points, eight assists and seven rebounds off the bench — including a late 3-pointer to seal the win.

Donovan Mitchell, Bojan Bogdanovic and Jordan Clarkson all scored 20 points, and Rudy Gobert had 20 points and 19 rebounds in Utah's seventh home loss.

Utah erased a 16-point deficit in the third quarter and took the lead with a 19-5 run. Bogdanovic and O'Neale hit back-to-back 3-pointers to punctuate the run that gave the Jazz a 79-74 lead.

Utah totaled 41 points in the third quarter — the most given up by Golden State during a single quarter this season. But the Warriors came back in the final quarter, scoring on seven consecutive possessions for an 111-106 lead.

Utah tied it at 111-111 on a 3-pointer from Bogdanovic. Curry answered with back-to-back baskets and Iguodala added a 3-pointer to give the Warriors a 119-112 lead with 40 seconds left.

Golden State shot 53% from the field before halftime and 53.5% overall for the game. The Warriors made 17 3-pointers and improved to 5-16 all-time in New Year's Day games.

Bulls 120, Wizards 119

In Washington, DeMar DeRozan hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer for the second straight game to give Chicago a



Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson (00) passes the ball to guard Mike Conley (11) while Clarkson is defended by Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, in Salt Lake City.

win over Washington.

Kyle Kuzma's 3-pointer with 3.3 seconds to play gave Washington a 119-117 lead, until DeRozan beat the Wizards in the same way he beat Indiana on Friday night.

DeRozan finished with 28 points and Zach LaVine had 35 points to help the Bulls to their seventh straight win, which is their longest streak since Dec. 18-29, 2014.

The Wizards led nearly the whole game, outscoring Chicago 72-30 in points in the paint.

Kuzma scored 29 points and had 12 rebounds, while Bradley Beal had 27 points and a career-high 16 assists in his first start at point guard. Beal also passed the 14,000 point mark.

Pistons 117, Spurs 116, OT

In Detroit, Saddiq Bey hit a 3-pointer with 1.9 seconds left in overtime and finished with 21 points to lead Detroit over San Antonio.

Hamidou Diallo had 34 points and 13 rebounds for Detroit, which had lost four in a row and 18 of its last 19 games. The Pistons had five players score in double figures and three — Diallo (14), Luka Garza (14) and Bey (17) — with double-digit rebounds. Garza scored 20 points, Caasius Stanley 17 and Derrick Walton had a career-high 11 points in the win.

Bryn Forbes came off the bench to score 27 points for the Spurs, who lost their third straight game. Devin Vassell added 19 points. Derrick

White scored 18, and Jakob Poeltl and Tre Jones each added 15 points.

Bucks 136, Pelicans 113

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 35 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists for his second triple-double of the season and Milwaukee won its sixth straight game by beating New Orleans.

Antetokounmpo has averaged 33 points, 11.5 rebounds and 6.5 assists in four games since returning from COVID-19 protocols that caused him to miss five games. Jordan Nwora had 23 points and shot 5 of 7 from 3-point range for the Bucks. Jrue Holiday scored 21, Allen added 16 points and Bobby Portis 14.

New Orleans' Josh Hart narrowly missed a triple-double with 14 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists. New Orleans was missing its top two scorers, though Jaxson Hayes had 23 points.

Clippers 120, Nets 116

In New York, Eric Bledsoe scored a season-high 27 points and short-handed Los Angeles, playing on the second night of a back-to-back, rallied to beat Brooklyn.

Terance Mann and Reggie Jackson added 19 points apiece for the Clippers, who were coached for the second straight night by assistant Brian Shaw with coach Tyrone Lue in health and safety protocols.

The Nets wasted James Harden's seventh triple-double. He finished with 34 points, 13 assists and 12 rebounds. Kevin Durant added 28 points and nine rebounds.

Nuggets 124, Rockets 111

In Houston, Nikola Jokic scored 24 points and Facundo Campazzo added a career-high 22 as Denver used a huge second quarter to take control in a win over Houston.

The Nuggets resumed play after their game against Golden State on Thursday was postponed because they didn't have enough players available due to injuries and health and safety protocols.

It's the third consecutive victory for Denver, and extends Houston's losing streak to seven games.

Houston led by as many as 11 points in the first quarter before the Nuggets scored a season-high 47 points in the second, giving them their most points in a half this season and a 77-55 lead at halftime.

Jalen Green, the second overall pick in the 2021 draft, had 29 points to lead Houston.

By **JIMMY GOLEN**
AP SPORTS WRITER

Hall of Famer Sam Jones, winner of 10 NBA titles, dies at 88

BOSTON (AP)—Basketball Hall of Famer Sam Jones, the Boston Celtics' "Mr. Clutch" whose sharp shooting fueled the league's longest dynasty and earned him 10 NBA titles — second only to teammate Bill Russell — has died, the team said. He was 88.

Jones died Thursday night in Florida, where he had been hospitalized in failing health, Celtics spokesman Jeff Twiss said.

"Sam Jones was one of the most talented, versatile, and clutch shooters for the most successful and dominant teams in NBA history," the team said in a statement.

"His scoring ability was so prolific, and his form so pure, that he earned the simple nickname, 'The Shooter,'" the Celtics said. "The Jones family is in our thoughts as we mourn his loss and fondly remember the life and career of one of the greatest champions in American sports."

The Celtics paused for a

moment of silence before Friday afternoon's game against the Phoenix Suns, showing a video tribute on the screen hanging among the championship banners above the parquet floor at the TD Garden. His No. 24, which was retired by the Celtics in 1969 while he was a still an active player, also was displayed on the monitor in the hushed arena before a still photo of him in a suit and the words "Sam Jones 1933-2021."

"Another one of my dear friends lost," Celtics broadcaster Cedric Maxwell wrote on Twitter. "Well, the banks are open in heaven this #NYE."

Often providing the offense while Russell locked things down at the other end, Jones averaged 17.7 points per game over 12 seasons. The number went up in the postseason, when he averaged 18.9 points and was usually the No. 1 option for the game's final shot for the teams that won 10 titles from 1959-69.

"We never flew first class in my 12 years of playing basketball," Jones told The Associated Press this fall in an interview for the league's 75th anniversary. "But we always won NBA championships."

In 1964, Jones was a member of the NBA's first starting lineup to include five Black players, joining Russell, Tom "Satch" Sanders, K.C. Jones and Willie Naulls. Although coach Red Auerbach maintained he was thinking only of his best chance to win, the lineup broke with an unwritten rule that pressured teams to have at least one white player on the floor.

Sam Jones, a North Carolina native who served two years in the Army before returning to college, told the AP that the NBA of the 1960s was little different than the segregated South where he grew up and went to school.

"I'm fighting for the freedom of everybody here in the United States. And when I

come back, I still got to fight for my freedom," Jones said. "Something is wrong with that, and has always been and is happening even today."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Jones will be remembered as "one of the most prolific champions in all of professional sports."

"His selfless style, clutch performances and signature bank shot were hallmarks of an incredible career," Silver said. "Sam was a beloved teammate and respected competitor who played the game with dignity and class. We mourn the passing of a basketball giant and send our deepest condolences to Sam's family and the Celtics organization."

Born in Wilmington, Jones attended North Carolina Central, a Division II, historically Black university in Durham. Auerbach first heard of Jones when he went to North Carolina to scout the national champion Tar

Heels and was told that the best player in the state was actually at Central playing for Hall of Fame coach John McLendon.

Auerbach selected Jones in the first round of the 1957 draft, eighth overall, despite never seeing him play.

"Russell and I are the most successful players in winning championships in the NBA. Yet he never saw us play a game because they had no scouts," Jones told the AP. "The coaches called other coaches to see how other players were playing. They took their word for it."

Jones led the Celtics in scoring five times — including the 1963 champions, when he was one of eight future Hall of Famers on the roster. When he retired in 1969 at the age of 36, Jones held 11 Celtics records and was the only player in franchise history to score more than 50 points in a game.

"You look at the champi-

onships and what he did, it's obviously a big loss for the community here," Celtics coach Ime Udoka said before Friday's game.

Using a bank shot that was unconventional even then, Jones came to be known as "Mr. Clutch" after a series of game-winners, including a buzzer-beater to clinch the 1962 Eastern Conference finals. He hit an off-balance, wrong-footed jumper to win Game 4 of the '69 Finals; instead of heading to Los Angeles trailing 3-1, the Celtics tied the series against the Lakers at two games apiece and went on to win in seven.

Jones retired after that title, having won his 10 championships in 12 seasons. A five-time All-Star, he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1984.

Jones was named to the NBA's 25th, 50th and 75th anniversary teams. His death comes a year after teammate Tommy Heinsohn and 13 months following the death of K.C. Jones.

Vikings lose Cousins to COVID list before game vs. Packers

By DAVE CAMPBELL
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



Kirk Cousins has never missed a game in the NFL to injury.

His first unplanned absence, due to COVID-19, could not have come at a worse time for the Minnesota Vikings.

The Vikings placed their starting quarterback on the COVID-19 reserve list Friday, two days before their most important game of the season at Green Bay.

Cousins, who is unvaccinated, couldn't be cleared in time to play even if he were feeling fine. The NFL recently reduced the required quarantine period to five days for asymptomatic players.

The Vikings (7-8) are one game out of the last wild-card spot in the NFC with two weeks to go. The Packers (12-3) are in control of the top seed and a first-round bye.

The Vikings activated backup quarterback Sean Mannion from the COVID-19 reserve list, putting the seventh-year veteran in line to start at frigid Lambeau Field on Sunday night. Rookie Kellen Mond, who was drafted in the third round, has not developed quickly enough this season to be considered.

"Sean is extremely bright. He studies like crazy. He's a great competitor. He's put in his time. He's earned this opportunity, and I think he'll be ready," coach Mike Zimmer said after practice on Friday.

Mannion started one game for the Los Angeles Rams in 2017 and one game for the Vikings in 2019, when Cousins was held out of the final regular-season game as a precaution prior to the playoffs.

"He's got a big-time arm.



He is going to do exactly what the coaches tell him. He is so reliable in that regard. I've got a lot of respect for him not only as a person but as a player," said Packers coach Matt LaFleur, who was Mannion's offensive coordinator with the Rams in 2017. "They've still got multiple playmakers on that offense, whether they do it through the air or on the ground."

After Minnesota's last game, a 30-23 loss to the Rams, Cousins acknowledged the predicament of the case numbers climbing within the team like all across the league.

"It's in our building. It's going to be in our building. It's going to spread. We've just got to be disciplined to keep our distance and make sure that to the best of our ability we don't get it," Cousins said, "but it is going to be

difficult."

Cousins has 30 touchdown passes and seven interceptions this season and is fourth in the NFL in passer rating (101.3). He is 29 yards passing short of hitting the 4,000 mark for a sixth time in seven years as a starter. Cousins is in his fourth season with the Vikings, who have him signed for 2022 with a \$45 million salary-cap charge.

Mond and recent addition Kyle Slotter are the other quarterbacks on Minnesota's roster. When Mond tested positive in training camp, Cousins had to sit out five days as an unvaccinated close contact.

Zimmer didn't hide his frustration in August with the players who remained unvaccinated, expressing resignation that they would miss games at some point during

the year. Plenty of vaccinated players have tested positive and had to sit out, of course, but the rate of infection by the virus among unvaccinated people is much higher.

Unvaccinated players must continue to test daily. Any player, regardless of vaccination status, must test while they have symptoms. Zimmer said he was not sure about symptoms for Cousins.

"We hate to see that happen to Kirk, but he's done a lot of great things for us," Zimmer said. "You're always hopeful that none of your players get it."

In Denver, the Broncos scrubbed their regular practice for the second straight day and instead held an indoor walkthrough on Friday after five more players were added to the COVID-19 list, including wide receiver Jerry

Jeudy, outside linebacker Bradley Chubb and inside linebacker Baron Browning. That brings the number of Broncos on the list to 15.

Coach Vic Fangio said he wasn't sure he'd be able to dress the usual 45 players on Sunday when the Broncos (7-8) play the Chargers (8-7), who are dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak of their own.

The Broncos will be without two starting wide receivers (Jeudy and Tim Patrick), three of their top four edge rushers (Chubb, Jonathon Cooper and Stephen Weatherly), their top slot cornerback (Bryce Callahan), their dime back (Caden Sterns), their starting right tackle (Bobby Massie) and their top swing tackle (Calvin Anderson) and a starting inside linebacker (Browning).

Also out because of COVID-19 is defensive line coach Bill Kollar.

Fangio acknowledged the outbreak forced him to change his game plans.

"Yeah, obviously it does, but it's not like we're recreating the wheel here," Fangio said. "We've just got to adjust some of the plays offensively to fit our personnel, both from a talent standpoint and a knowledge standpoint. And the same thing will happen defensively."

The Cincinnati Bengals placed cornerback Trae Waynes on COVID-19 reserve, ahead of their much-anticipated game against the AFC-leading Kansas City Chiefs.

Around the league, teams were experiencing more gains than losses as players in the pre-Christmas surge of positive tests have begun to trickle back to action.

The Jacksonville Jaguars activated seven players from

Minnesota Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins passes during the first half of an NFL football game against the Chicago Bears Monday, Dec. 20, 2021, in Chicago.

their COVID-19 reserve list, including defensive starters Josh Allen, Myles Jack and Damien Wilson. Allen, Jack and Wilson cleared protocols and will fly with the team to New England.

The Jaguars (2-13) later added cornerback Shaquill Griffin to the list, bringing their total to 21 players. They also could be without defensive line coach Tosh Lupoi. Interim coach Darrell Bevell said Friday he hopes center Brandon Linder and guard Andrew Norwell will be cleared in time to play the Patriots. Jacksonville has a second plane lined up to take players who could still clear protocols as late as Sunday morning.

Griffin, left tackle Cam Robinson, returner Jaydon Mickens and safeties Rudy Ford and Andrew Wingard are out. Bevell said rookie quarterback Trevor Lawrence will start, no matter what the offensive line looks like.

Also returning from COVID-19 reserve on Friday:

■ Safety Jahleel Addae and running back Marlon Mack to the Indianapolis Colts.

■ Defensive tackle Akiem Hicks to the Chicago Bears.

■ Wide receiver Mike Evans to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who put punter Bradley Pinion on the COVID-19 reserve list.

■ Guard Sean Harlow to the Arizona Cardinals.

■ Defensive tackle Tyler Davison to the Atlanta Falcons.

■ Cornerback Kevin King to the Packers.

The Indianapolis Colts activated quarterback Carson Wentz from the reserve/COVID-19 list Saturday and he should be able to start against Las Vegas on Sunday.

Wentz, who is unvaccinated, must have a negative test Sunday to be allowed to play under new protocols adopted by the NFL and the players' union this week. He went on the COVID-19 list Tuesday and was required to isolate for five days.

The Colts (9-6) can clinch a playoff berth by winning. They also activated cornerback T.J. Carrie and tackle Braden Smith from the COVID-19 list, while promoting quarterback Brett Hundley and defensive tackle Chris Williams from the practice squad as coronavirus replacements.

Tampa Bay (11-4) said Saturday that Bruce Arians will

Colts activate QB Carson Wentz from COVID-19 list

coach in the game at the New York Jets. Arians had gone into COVID-19 protocols earlier in the week.

Wide receivers coach Kevin Garver also will work the game after coming off the list. Activated to play were cornerbacks Jamel Dean and Sean Murphy-Bunting.

Also:

■ Jacksonville (2-13) activated five players from the reserve/COVID-19 list, including starting defensive tackle Malcom Brown and guard Andrew Norwell. The Jaguars also activated defensive tackle DaVon Hamilton, tight end Chris Manhertz and defensive end Jihad Ward. They placed defensive end Duwane Smoot on the COVID-19 list, meaning

he will miss Sunday's game at New England.

Smoot is one of eight Jacksonville starters and 13 players in total sidelined because of COVID-19. The list includes three starting offensive linemen — left tackle Cam Robinson, center Brandon Linder and guard Ben Bartch—and five backups.

■ Green Bay (12-3) activated punter Corey Bojorquez, guard Ben Braden, linebackers Ty Summers and Oren Burks, tight ends Tyler Davis and Mercedes Lewis off the COVID-19 list, though and Summers reverts to injured reserve. The Packers, who are closing in on the NFC's top overall seed and only playoff bye, also restored defensive lineman RJ McIntosh

to the practice squad from the list, and elevated DL Abdullah Anderson to the active roster as a COVID-19 replacement.

■ The Los Angeles Chargers (8-7) activated eight players, including five starters: offensive tackle Storm Norton, safety Nasir Adderley, cornerback Chris Harris Jr., placekicker Dustin Hopkins and long snapper Matt Overton. Los Angeles also added safety Alohi Gilman, cornerback Davontae Harris and tackle Trey Pipkins III to the active roster.

The Chargers have dropped two straight and need a win against Denver to keep their postseason hopes alive.

■ Cincinnati returned QB Brandon Allen and linebacker

Germaine Pratt to the active roster from the COVID-19 list. Receiver Trent Taylor is a COVID-19 replacement. Going on the list was tight end Scotty Washington of the practice squad.

The Bengals (9-6) host Kansas City and can clinch the AFC North title with a victory.

■ Houston (4-11) added five players from the practice squad as COVID-19 replacements: WRs Jalen Camp and Jordan Veasy; RB Jaylen Samuels; DB Cre'von LeBlanc; and offensive lineman Jordan Steckler.

■ Denver (7-8) brought up seven replacements from the practice squad, including veteran safety Ha Ha Clinton Dix. The others: tackles Quinn Bailey and Drew Himmelman;

WR Rico Gafford; defensive linemen Jonathan Harris and Marquiss Spencer; and linebacker Barrington Wade.

■ Miami (8-7) listed as questionable for its game at Tennessee DL Adam Butler and S Brandon Jones, who were on the COVID-19 list. They were traveling separate from the team.

■ Arizona (10-5) elevated DL Josh Mauro and CB Kevin Peterson from the practice squad as COVID-19 replacements.

■ Minnesota (7-8) activated S Myles Dorn, CB Tye Smith and DE Kenny Willekes as COVID-19 replacements and G Olisaemeka Udoh from the COVID-19 list. DT Michael Pierce has been downgraded to out.

■ San Francisco activated punter Mitch Wishnowsky from the list. (AP)

Mental health among athletes spotlighted in tumultuous 2021

By JENNA FRYER
AP NATIONAL WRITER

Simone Biles understands now that she was struggling long before she arrived at the Tokyo Olympics, where the unofficial face of the Games and one of the greatest gymnasts of all time was unable to force a smile and push her way through on the world's biggest stage.

Biles had persevered through the widespread sexual and emotional abuse scandal that rocked the gymnastics community. She continued her intense training and preparation for the Olympics through its yearlong pandemic delay.

She was fine, she convinced herself.

But when the seven-time Olympic medalist stepped onto the floor in July for the women's team final, she was not fine. Biles was suffering from "the twisties," a phenomenon in which she'd lost her sense of air because her mind and body could not sync, and she walked off the floor.

"I think it's definitely pent up emotions, aggressions for the past couple of years, trauma that led to that moment of once I got on the global scene, it just cracked," Biles said.

Recognizing that she was not in the right head space to compete safely, Biles ultimately pulled out of four events. She returned to win a bronze medal on the beam, but that shiny piece of hardware represented a much larger victory for Biles.

Her very public admission that she was struggling, which followed a decision months earlier by tennis player Naomi Osaka to withdraw from the French Open and not play Wimbledon, redefined the mental health discussion that's been coursing through sports.

"I gave so many opportunities to a lot of the athletes there," Biles said of the impact her decision made on others.

Michael Phelps, retired swimmer and winner of a record 23 gold medals, said the day after Biles walked off the floor in Tokyo that the gymnast had shown "it is OK not to be OK." Phelps has long been public about his own mental health struggles — including acknowledging he contemplated suicide after the 2012 Olympics—but Biles blew the discussion wide open.

Athletes over the last few years had started to publicly address anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts they experienced. But heightened by the strains of the pandemic and the support shown to both Biles and Osaka, the toughest of the tough are no longer "shaking it off," or any of the cliché things athletes are supposed to do.

In the last three months:

- Atlanta Falcons receiver Calvin Ridley stepped away from the game in October to "focus on my mental wellbeing," he wrote on social media. "This will help me be the best version of myself now and in the future."
- Tennessee Titans receiver A.J. Brown shared a video on the one-year anniversary of the day he considered suicide to deal with depression he was battling during a breakout 2020 Pro Bowl season. "I just wanted to put out a positive message that I'm still here. I'm still growing. I'm still learning."
- Philadelphia Eagles left tackle Lane Johnson missed three games to address depression and anxiety. "I was living in hell for a long time. Don't bottle it up. And it's easy to do that. It's easy to avoid the situations that you don't want to go through."
- Bianca Andreescu, the 2019 U.S. Open champion, said she would take a mental break from tennis and sit out the start of next season to "re-set, recover, and grow" after a challenging two years that included contracting COVID-19. "I could not detach myself from everything that was going on off the court; was feeling the collective sadness and turmoil around and it took its toll on me," the 21-year-old Canadian wrote on social media.

Before boarding a flight back to the chilly East Coast on Thursday, Jan. 6, Tan said she plans to soak up all the tropical sunshine on Saipan.

"I'm very happy to be back on island for Christmas. The weather is so much nicer. I can go swim in the ocean whenever I want. It's nice to be back!"

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Aside from Heras, Lee, and Schorr, the fourth player Race automatically named to the national tennis team is Colin Sinclair, who won three gold medals in Apia. He won the men's singles, men's team (with Schorr and Ken Song), and mixed doubles (with Lee).

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Rampage 56 — Walker 18, Jay. Epity 14, T. Borja 8, Pascua 8, R. Borja 2, Reyes 2, Cepeda 2, Johannes 2.

Team Kio 51 — D. Sablan 16, Cruz 13, Reyes 8, King 7, Sanchez 7.

Scoring by quarters: 10-13, 23-25, 35-40, 56-51.

resented a much larger victory for Biles.

Her very public admission that she was struggling, which followed a decision months earlier by tennis player Naomi Osaka to withdraw from the French Open and not play Wimbledon, redefined the mental health discussion that's been coursing through sports.

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AP
Naomi Osaka, of Japan, reacts during her match against Karolina Muchova, of the Czech Republic, at Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid, Spain, May 2, 2021.

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NBA STANDINGS				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	23	10	.697	—
Philadelphia	19	16	.543	5
Boston	17	19	.472	7½
New York	17	19	.472	7½
Toronto	15	17	.469	7½
Southeast Division				
Miami	23	13	.639	—
Charlotte	19	17	.528	4
Washington	18	17	.514	4½
Atlanta	16	19	.457	6½
Orlando	7	29	.194	16
Central Division				
Chicago	23	10	.697	—
Milwaukee	24	13	.649	1
Cleveland	20	16	.556	4½
Indiana	14	22	.389	10½
Detroit	5	28	.152	18
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest Division				
Memphis	23	14	.622	—
Dallas	17	18	.486	5
San Antonio	14	20	.412	7½
New Orleans	13	22	.371	9
Houston	10	26	.278	12½
Northwest Division				
Utah	26	9	.743	—
Denver	17	16	.515	8
Minnesota	16	19	.457	10
Oklahoma City	13	22	.371	13
Portland	13	22	.371	13
Pacific Division				
Golden State	27	7	.794	—
Phoenix	27	8	.771	½
L.A. Clippers	18	18	.500	10
L.A. Lakers	18	19	.486	10½
Sacramento	15	22	.405	13½

KETOLA

From Page 20

so there was me and there were two other guys. I think one was from ACS. It was like kind of trying to feel it out thing as you don't want to blow off [everything] right from the beginning because you'd never know if someone comes up to you right at the end. So I started conservatively and kind of worked

WAY

From Page 20

naments I will be playing. Another exciting thing is that it is going to be held on home soil! Not only do I think this is a great opportunity for the younger peers in Saipan to watch some high level tennis, but it is an honor to play at the home courts I started playing tennis at," she said.

Heras, who is studying healthcare management with a minor in pre-healthcare, said she's a better version of herself than the player that

TEAMWORK

From Page 20

members played well during the championship game."

The game for all the marbles last week was intense from the get-go with Kio taking a thin 13-10 lead in the first quarter thanks to the 6 points of Dustin Sablan.

Epity would not let Kio get too far ahead in the second canto, as he hook-shot his way to 8 points and Rampage kept it close down by just a deuce, 23-25, at the halftime break.

Sablan and Marvin Cruz

from there," said Ketola, who was part of Run Saipan Team B in the recent Christmas Island Relay.

Tan, meanwhile, celebrated her return to Saipan by finishing fourth overall and top among the women with a time of 5:49. She was followed by Akiko Miller in 6:24 with Ayano Braxton completing the women's Top 3 with a time of 7:01.41.

The Fordham University ju-

was part of the CNMI team in the 1999 Pacific Mini Games in Apia, Samoa.

"I have seen a huge improvement tennis-wise transferring to Metropolitan State University of Denver. My coach has focused on areas such as consistency, shot variety, and fitness which are definitely points that I have improved on since 2019."

She said sky's the limit for Team CNMI for this year's Mini Games, especially since they have the home crowd encouraging them on.

"I am hoping that we will get the gold for both the men's and

tag-teamed in the third quarter to make up for the off game of leading scorer Robert Reyes. With the duo combining for 13 points, Kio managed to open a 40-35 spread heading into the fourth and final quarter.

At that point Reyes, who averaged nearly 20 points in the regular season, only had 7 points as Pascua masterfully rotated several players against him.

Primarily defended by the rugged Venny Untalan, Reyes never got into his comfort zone as he was constantly dou-

nior said she was as surprised as everyone that she won the Inaugural 1 Mile Road Race.

"This is not my race I'm better at long distance races. So I just did this for fun. It was good but the road was really slippery because it's been pouring rain," said the 20-year-old.

Tan admitted that she didn't really train for the 1-mile race.

"I didn't really train for this race as this was my training

women's category. The NMI has strong players and I am positive we can do it if we want it strong enough," she said.

Heras finished her most recent season at MSU with a 12-5 win-loss record in singles play and a 16-6 record in doubles.

"Last year my team and I finished fifth out of 16 teams in our conference. My doubles partner (Brooklyn Ross) and I were ranked No. 15 in the nation for Division II doubles pairing results," she said.

Heras said she plans to pursue a master's degree after finishing her undergraduate

ble- and triple-teamed and he lost the ball quite a few times because of this box-and-1 defensive scheme implemented by Pascua.

As the fourth quarter ensued, the pressure got the better of Kio to complete an unprecedented undefeated season. Rampage, for its part, just played their game and with Walker and Borja putting the finishing touches on a gem of a finals upset, Rampage was able to eke out the 5-point win to take home the championships.

Walker finished with 18

for the coming season [of college track and field]."

And speaking of college track and field, Tan said she really enjoyed going back to competition last semester after most COVID-19 restrictions have been eased in the U.S. mainland.

"It was really fun. We got to travel a lot. We flew to Ohio. It's always nice to travel as a team and bond, race, and have fun together," she said.

studies.

"I am a senior in my major and will be graduating with my bachelors in the spring of 2022. I will be using my COVID year, fifth year of eligibility, to play for Metro State and start my masters in healthcare management."

Asked who she's dedicating her success in the tennis court, Heras rattled out the usual suspects—her parents, Natalia Gvan and Carlos Heras; and her coach, CNMI national tennis coach and CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Jeff Race.

"My parents and their support

points, 11 rebounds, and six assists en route to winning the aforementioned finals MVP award. Epity chipped in 14 points, while Borja was a tower of power inside the paint with 8 points and a boatload of rebounds and blocks.

Kio was led by the 16 points of Sablan and the 13 points of Cruz. Reyes would score only 1 point in the fourth to finish with a season low 8 markers.

"On behalf of Team Rampage, we thank the TABA/TASA for organizing this basketball season, and we're hope-



Ketola, Tan are 1 mile run royalty

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Keith Ketola and Tania Tan were crowned the fastest 1-mile runners on island after topping the Inaugural 1 Mile Road Race held last Friday from the World War II Tank Memorial along Quartermaster Road to just before the Oleai Beach Bar & Grill in Oleai.

Ketola, the 25-year-old law clerk of CNMI Supreme Court Associate Justice John A. Manglona, was the only runner to complete the run in under 5 minutes—4:45—to win the men’s division. He was followed by Kosuke Sato after the general manager of Kingfisher Golf Links



crossed the finish line in 5:22. Agape Christian School’s Eason Tang completed the Top 3 with a time of 5:25. Ketola said overall the run was good, considering that he hasn’t really ran competitively since hanging up his running cleats shortly after finishing his studies at St.



Ketola




Tan

Olaf College, where he was a NCAA Division III runner. “I graduated college in 2018 so that was kind of the end of my competitive racing career. Now, I just run for fun, to stay in shape, and stuff like this just to get out and see what’s go-

ing on.” He said it was not a wire-to-wire win for him as he ran the early parts of the race with some company. “I think the first 600m or
See KETOLA on Page 19

Teamwork, defense keys to Rampage’s title run

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

 Aside from the two-way dominance of Finals MVP Wesley Walker, coach Leo Pascua credits Rampage’s teamwork and emphasis on the defensive side of the floor as the keys to winning the championship of the recent Island-wide Men’s Bud Light Basketball League. Team Rampage was crowned champion of Tinian’s men’s open league after fashioning a come-from-behind 56-51 win over previously undefeated Team Kio last Wednesday at the Tinian Youth Center.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rampage players pose for a group photo after winning the championship of the Island-wide Men’s Bud Light Basketball League last Wednesday at the Tinian Youth Center.

“It was all teamwork and employing good defense. We have our MVP Wesley Walker taking charge on offense and defense. We also have our center Toram Borja aggressively

blocking shots and getting all the rebounds. Then we have Jayron Epity with his signature hook shots,” he said. Pascua added that even before the start of the finals game against Kio, the team was already upbeat about their chances of breaking their opponent’s 14-game winning streak and in the process crown themselves as champions. “Prior to the start of the game, we were already in a positive mood, and encouraged each other that we made it to the championship as a third-ranked team in the play-off standing. All in all, it was great team effort as all team

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ROADRUNNERS ATHLETICS

Metropolitan State University of Denver’s Isabel Heras in action in this file photo.

‘We have come a long way’

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Division II tennis player Isabel Heras is honored to be one of four automatic picks for the CNMI National Tennis Team for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games the CNMI will be hosting for the first time ever this year. “It’s an honor to represent the NMI in the Mini Games especially with Carol [Lee] and Robbie [Schorr]! We have all seen each other’s



growth since starting tennis back then. We have come a long way!” The 21-year-old junior at Metropolitan State University of Denver expects to be at the peak of her powers when she suits up for Team CNMI in June 2022. “I am super-pumped for the Mini Games as I will be a senior in the peak of my performance fresh from the PAC West conference tour-
See WAY on Page 19